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## **The Shia Revival** p9

Vali Nasr

## **The Emergence of 5th Generation Warfare** p14

Colonel T. X. Hammes, USMC, Retired

## **Afghanistan: The Case for More Reconstruction and Stabilization Aid** p38

Captain Craig C. Colucci, U.S. Army

## **Cows, Korans, and Kalashnikovs: Conflict in Central Sudan** p46

Major Christopher H. Varhola, U.S. Army Reserve

### **FEATURE:**

## **Partnership for the Americas: The Human Rights Initiative** p2

Admiral Jim Stavridis, U.S. Navy; Alexander T. Roney; and Leana Bresnahan

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## FEATURED ARTICLES

### 2 Partnership for the Americas: The Human Rights Initiative

Admiral Jim Stavridis, U. S. Navy; Alexander T. Roney; and Leana Bresnahan  
USSOUTHCOM is the only combatant command with a separate office charged to monitor and coordinate human rights issues.

### 9 The Shia Revival

Vali Nasr  
The author of *The Shia Revival* offers MR readers a condensed version of the argument he puts forth in his widely acclaimed book.

### 14 Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges

Colonel T.X. Hammes, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired  
Changes in the political, economic, social, and technical spheres are making it possible for a super-empowered small group to use new technologies to challenge nation-states.

### 24 Counterinsurgency Diplomacy: Political Advisors at the Operational and Tactical Levels

Dan Green  
In the age of the strategic corporal, it is high time for the tactical POLAD.

### 31 Everything Old is New Again: Task Force Phantom in the Iraq War

Lieutenant Colonel Robert P. Whalen Jr., U.S. Army  
Using cold war doctrine, long-range surveillance (LRS) companies are meeting an urgent, enduring need in Iraq.

### 38 Committing to Afghanistan: The Case for Increasing U.S. Reconstruction and Stabilization Aid

Captain Craig C. Colucci, U.S. Army  
The United States should increase R&S aid to Afghanistan immediately, so that Afghanistan does not become a staging ground for terrorist operations.

### 46 Cows, Korans, and Kalashnikovs: The Multiple Dimensions of Conflict in the Nuba Mountains of Central Sudan

Major Christopher H. Varhola, U.S. Army Reserve, Ph.D.  
To succeed at the delicate task of peacekeeping, one must constantly analyze the social, economic, religious, and cultural factors that fed the preceding conflict.

### 56 Managing Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Malaya

Walter C. Ladwig III  
In the Malayan Emergency, the British found that the most important element of their counterinsurgency campaign was a unified plan that included all the elements of national power.

### 67 Army IO is PSYOP: Influencing More with Less

Colonel Curtis D. Boyd, U.S. Army  
The commander-designate of the Army's only active-duty PSYOP group argues that the information operations construct adds little value to the fight.

**Cover Photo:** U.S. Army SSG Gentles spots his next leap while crossing a stream during a patrol near the Pakistani border in the Paktika province of Afghanistan, 30 March 2007. The patrol was part of a mission intended to disrupt enemy movement in areas known to have enemy activity. (U.S. Army, SSG Justin Holley)



## 76 Understanding the Link between Center of Gravity and Mission Accomplishment

*Colonel William G. Pierce, U.S. Army, Retired, Ph.D., and Colonel Robert C. Coon, U.S. Army, Retired*

Neutralizing the enemy's center of gravity is only one step toward mission accomplishment. Planners must also ensure the adversary leader gets the message and is properly influenced.

## 85 Of Shoes and Sites: Globalization and Insurgency

*Captain Christopher M. Ford, U.S. Army, J.D.*

It is a given that the globalization of communications technology has changed the way insurgency wars are fought. But which side has benefited most, and how?

## 92 In Defense of Military Public Affairs Doctrine

*Commander J.D. Scanlon, Canadian Armed Forces*

Initiatives aimed at breaking down the wall between public affairs and propaganda only hurt the cause of democratic armies and nations.

## 97 Discouraging Hearts and Minds: Democracies and Insurgencies

*Major Erik Claessen, Belgian Armed Forces*

A limited military capability that is sustainable because it is too small to attract media attention can be more successful than a large military capability that can be exploited for political gain.

## INSIGHTS

### 104 The Power Equation: Using Tribal Politics in Counterinsurgency

*Major Morgan Mann, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve*

To deal effectively with tribes and sheiks, coalition commanders must be willing to use the carrot, the stick, and the negotiating process.

### 109 Ethics and Operations: Training the Combatant

*Centres des Hautes Etudes Militaires*

Soldiers engaged in counterinsurgency and other unconventional, problematic operations must have some way to keep their moral compasses straight.

## Classics Revisited

### Book Reviews Contemporary readings for the professional

George W. Casey, Jr.  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

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JOYCE E. MORROW  
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Secretary of the Army 0633905

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# PARTNERSHIP FOR THE AMERICAS: *The Human Rights Initiative*

Admiral Jim Stavridis, U.S. Navy; Alexander T. Roney;  
and Leana Bresnahan

*The United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere. These nonnegotiable demands of human dignity are protected most securely in democracies. The United States government will work to advance human dignity in word and deed, speaking out for freedom and against violations of human rights and allocating resources to advance these ideals.*

—National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2006)<sup>1</sup>

THE U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND (USSOUTHCOM) is responsible for conducting military operations, planning, and security cooperation with the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. From its headquarters in Miami, USSOUTHCOM professionals focus their efforts on realizing the command's vision of a community of nations that enjoy lasting relationships based on shared values and common interests. These relationships are critical to addressing the security challenges facing the nations today—challenges that are largely transnational in nature and, as such, require cooperative solutions. USSOUTHCOM's motto of "Partnership for the Americas" underscores the importance of working together as partners toward common goals.

Respect for human rights and the rule of law is a critical aspect of these partnerships, and USSOUTHCOM plays a leading role in helping to foster that respect. In response to the widespread human rights abuses that rocked many of the nations of Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, USSOUTHCOM leaders created a human rights program that focused on ensuring correct behavior by U.S. military personnel and on encouraging the institutionalization of a culture of respect for human rights in partner-nation military forces. In the 15 years of its existence, this unique program has proven to be invaluable to advancing the Partnership for the Americas.

## History of USSOUTHCOM's Program

In 1990, General Maxwell R. Thurman, USSOUTHCOM commander, issued a policy defining the human rights responsibilities of all U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) personnel who served in the command's area of focus.

In unequivocal terms, the new directive stated that "one of our most important and universal foreign policy objectives is to promote the increased observance of internationally recognized human rights by all countries." This memorandum established the requirement for all U.S. military personnel to immediately record and report through the chain of command any instance of suspected human rights violation. To ensure U.S. military

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Alexander T. Roney served as a policy analyst with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) in support of the U.S. Southern Command from 1999 to 2006.

Leana Bresnahan has served as coordinator for the USSOUTHCOM Human Rights Program since 1996. Currently a student at St. Thomas University, she will complete her master's of law in intercultural human rights in May 2007.

(All photos courtesy of  
USSOUTHCOM)

personnel were aware of what constituted a human rights violation, General Thurman also instituted mandatory human rights training for all personnel deploying within USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility.

Established in mid-1990, the mandatory training included instruction in four key areas: the laws of war and international humanitarian law; U.S. Government human rights policies, objectives, and directives at the national and international level; the responsibilities of military personnel to support these policies; and procedures for reporting suspected human rights violations. This pre-deployment training was supplemented by a wallet-sized, quick-reference Human Rights Standing Orders Card that personnel were required to carry at all times. The card, with minor revisions, remains in use today. It reminds personnel of "the five R's of human rights" (recognize, refrain, react, record, and report) and lists USSOUTHCOM's standing orders concerning respect for human rights.

The command was acutely aware that failure to improve respect for human rights in the region would ultimately jeopardize the success of its missions and undermine public and congressional support for essential military-to-military programs. Consequently, shortly after initiating the internal training program, USSOUTHCOM also made human rights instruction an element of all training provided to partner-nation military forces.

Over the course of the next decade, subsequent commanders built upon the strong foundation prepared by General Thurman. General George A. Joulwan, USSOUTHCOM commander from 1990 through 1993, supplemented the training materials with a video presentation that codified the responsibility of all USSOUTHCOM personnel to recognize and report human rights violations. The content

of the training video earned praise from the non-governmental human rights community, although many in the community remained skeptical that the command would be able to rapidly implement the policy as it was presented.

In February 1994, General Barry R. McCaffrey, USSOUTHCOM commander from 1994 through 1996, created an organizational framework that integrated human rights directly into USSOUTHCOM daily operations. He transferred responsibility for the human rights program from the command judge advocate to a dedicated human rights office. His goal was to instill a human rights mindset in each member of the command and into all aspects of the command's operations while simultaneously facilitating similar changes in regional military and security forces. McCaffrey challenged the new office to change attitudes, not merely behavior, about human rights. This was the fundamental goal USSOUTHCOM was striving to achieve.

In September 1994, McCaffrey also formed a senior-level human rights steering group to provide him advice on human rights issues and to oversee policy implementation. According to McCaffrey, the steering group would ensure that fostering respect for human rights became a concern of all the command's various components.

## The Human Rights Division Today

USSOUTHCOM's Human Rights Division today is an institutional statement of the command's commitment to maintaining a robust human rights program. It remains unique across DOD, as USSOUTHCOM is the only combatant command with a separate office charged to monitor and coordinate human rights issues. The Human Rights Division has five primary responsibilities:

- Advise and report on human rights issues.
- Establish and support human rights training programs.
- Ensure that human rights are integrated into USSOUTHCOM exercises and operations.
- Advance respect for human rights by supporting regional initiatives.
- Serve as a liaison with other entities working human rights issues, such as the interagency community, international organizations, and nongovernmental human rights organizations.

***The command [USSOUTHCOM] was acutely aware that failure to improve respect for human rights in the region would ultimately jeopardize the success of its missions...***

***...USSOUTHCOM is the only combatant command with a separate office charged to monitor and coordinate human rights issues.***

In advising and reporting on human rights issues, the division monitors and analyzes developments in international human rights law. It ensures that personnel assigned to the USSOUTHCOM staff receive all the information they need to comply with DOD policies and directives and the command's own human rights policy. It prepares country-specific information for the commander's meetings with foreign dignitaries and supports congressional testimony by senior USSOUTHCOM personnel. It keeps the command's leadership abreast of important provisions in domestic laws related to human rights as well those that affect many security cooperation activities.

The division ensures that all personnel assigned to the command or performing temporary duty in the region receive initial human rights training and that permanently assigned personnel receive annual human rights awareness training. To facilitate access to the training materials, the division uses a computer-based training module, available over the Internet via its website. In addition, the division supports other countries' efforts to develop their own human rights and international humanitarian law training. It does this in close cooperation with the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) at Fort Benning, Georgia, and other military schools that have developed rigorous human rights training programs.

To integrate human rights awareness into all of USSOUTHCOM's operations and plans, personnel are exposed, whenever possible, to realistic situations during military exercises that test their knowledge. The Human Rights Division helps prepare and evaluate the human rights scenarios incorporated into exercises.

The last two responsibilities, supporting regional initiatives and serving as a liaison with the human rights community, help build networks and partnerships throughout the region and provide opportunities to foster understanding and respect

for human rights. The initiatives and liaison have helped USSOUTHCOM pave the way for greater cooperation and progress.

## **Engaging Regional Leaders on Human Rights**

USSOUTHCOM sponsored two key regional human rights conferences, one in 1996 and the other in 1997. The first conference, entitled "The Role of the Armed Forces in the Protection of Human Rights," capitalized on the momentum created by the 1995 Defense Ministerial of the Americas, a meeting at which representatives of all 34 democracies in the Americas affirmed their armed forces' commitment to respect human rights and to subordinate themselves to civilian and constitutional authority. The Human Rights Division followed up the ministerial by organizing a conference to address the obligations of military and security-force personnel under international human rights and humanitarian law and to discuss approaches to human rights education and training. This conference was organized in cooperation with the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights, marking the first time any U.S. military command had ever forged such a partnership with an international human rights organization.<sup>2</sup>

The conference provided a unique opportunity for senior defense officials and military officers to begin a dialogue with representatives of human rights organizations. In doing so, it helped break down deeply ingrained mutual suspicions. Initially, these suspicions were so strong that they led to self-imposed segregated seating. As the conference progressed, however, the participants gradually integrated and a growing amount of one-on-one dialogue began to overcome the perceived obstacles between what had seemed to be thoroughly incompatible organizations. In the end, the conference revealed a growing consensus on the importance of human rights and democratic governance and the crucial role of the region's security forces in protecting them.

In February 1997, USSOUTHCOM collaborated with the Inter-American Institute on a second conference, titled "Armed Forces, Democracy, and Human Rights on the Threshold of the 21st Century." At its conclusion, a consensus emerged: more than 190 participants from across the Americas agreed that more concrete steps were now needed



to keep the human rights agenda moving forward. Accordingly, General Wesley K. Clark, USSOUTHCOM commander from 1996 to 1997, invited the participants to work together to establish common criteria for measuring the progress made by military and security forces in respecting human rights.

## **The Human Rights Initiative (HRI)**

The two human rights conferences, and Clark's offer to sponsor a long-term regional initiative, marked a turning point in USSOUTHCOM's human rights program. Thurman and Joulwan had focused on laying the foundation of a strong human rights program, implementing critical improvements to training and doctrine, and pursuing bilateral initiatives with regional militaries. Under McCaffrey, the human rights program matured via organizational changes that brought respect for human rights and international humanitarian law more fully into the operational realm. Through the seminars proposed by Clark, the program promoted a multilateral approach to improving respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. As Clark later recalled, the achievements made by the command's human rights program through 1997 had already changed human rights, in his words, "from an obstacle to a centerpiece" of the command's relationship with regional military and security forces.

In June 1997, the first regional meeting was held in Panama City, Panama. It included a small group of approximately 20 representatives of regional military and security forces, USSOUTHCOM, and the nongovernmental human rights community. Its theme was "Measuring Progress in Respect for Human Rights." The format, which remained the same for subsequent seminars, encouraged dynamic interaction, allowing the participants to reach consensus on difficult issues by engaging each other in dialogue in small groups.

The seminar succeeded in producing a draft "consensus document" identifying human rights standards and objectives for military doctrine, education, and training; effective internal control systems; and cooperation by military forces with external control systems. The process of finalizing and ultimately implementing the document became known as the Human Rights Initiative, or HRI.

From 1998 to 2002, USSOUTHCOM sponsored five additional hemispheric seminars to develop

plans of action, objectives, and performance measures. By the conclusion of the final seminar in March 2002, military and/or security-force officers from all 34 democracies in the Western Hemisphere had participated in drafting and finalizing the consensus document. Prominent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and academic institutions sent representatives to serve as advisors. The final wording can truly be said to represent agreements reached between the hemisphere's military forces and the human rights community, writ large.

***From 1998 to 2002, USSOUTHCOM sponsored five additional hemispheric [human rights] seminars to develop plans of action, objectives, and performance measures.***

The consensus document embodies the principles that USSOUTHCOM, NGOs, and human rights activists have long espoused. These include fostering a culture of respect for human rights in the region's military and security forces; introducing rigorous human rights awareness training; establishing effective means of internal control, such as conducting investigations; sanctioning human rights offenders; prohibiting collaboration with illegal groups that commit human rights violations; and encouraging full cooperation with civilian authorities. The consensus document represents an unprecedented degree of cooperation and dialogue on human rights among the region's military and security forces, and between the security forces and representatives of the human rights community.

With the completion of the consensus document, the HRI entered the implementation phase. Participants in the final seminar expressed the strong desire that the consensus document not become "just another document that sits on the shelf," but that it be implemented and deliver a "real world" impact. In a statement entitled "The Conclusions of Guatemala," participants requested that USSOUTHCOM

continue to support the HRI. They specifically requested that USSOUTHCOM seek high-level support from the participating nations' ministries of defense and security and continue to collaborate with nongovernmental and international human rights organizations during the implementation phase.

## HRI Phase II: Implementation

To implement the tenets of the consensus document, USSOUTHCOM in October

2003 contracted a Costa Rica-based human rights NGO, the Center for Human Rights Training (CECADH), to serve as the HRI secretariat.

Work began in earnest as CECADH and the USSOUTHCOM human rights team designed a strategy for approaching the countries of the region to promote participation in HRI Phase II. The first step of the process is a visit to each nation, to inform the nation's military and government leaders about the history, goals, and objectives of HRI, and to invite them to make a formal commitment to implement HRI within their military and security forces. Following a visit, the partner-nation's minister of defense typically informs USSOUTHCOM, through its military security cooperation office in the U.S. Embassy, when it is ready to move ahead with a formal commitment to implement HRI. That formal commitment is made through the signing of a memorandum of cooperation with the HRI secretariat. This emphasizes the important distinction that participation in HRI is not a commitment to the U.S. Government, but rather a commitment to uphold principles and standards agreed upon within the community of nations of the Western Hemisphere.

Following the signing of the memorandum, USSOUTHCOM stands ready to sponsor a leaders' seminar and an implementation conference. The leaders' seminar familiarizes the small number of military officers and civilians charged to lead the implementation process with the consensus document and the methodology to develop a unique national version. The implementation conference is a larger event in which officers from all the military



U.S. and Guatemalan dignitaries attend the kickoff of the Human Rights Initiative's implementation, Guatemala City, Guatemala, December 2004.

services, representatives of other government agencies, and representatives of civil society, including academia and human rights organizations, adapt the regional consensus document model to national realities. Conference participants produce a comprehensive plan showing timelines, institutions, offices responsible for execution, and measures of effectiveness for each specific action plan.

The core objectives of the consensus document cannot be changed unless by consensus in a future hemispheric conference. Participants in the national HRI events therefore work only with the specific action plans that affect actual implementation within their institutions. In this way, the consensus document both supports regional agreements on human rights and encourages innovation and appropriate activities that respond to the real needs of the military forces in each nation.

As of this writing, the HRI team has conducted 20 visits to 15 countries, concentrating primarily on Central America and the Andean Region. Eight nations have signed memoranda of cooperation and one has begun implementation independently. In November 2005, the Conference of Central American Armed Forces became the first regional organization to join HRI. For the year ahead, the focus will be on approaching the remaining Southern Cone nations, followed by the island nations of the Caribbean.

During the implementation phase, the HRI secretariat and USSOUTHCOM stand ready to provide technical assistance to the implementing militaries when requested. Some of the most noteworthy action plans have included printing and distribution of human

rights manuals for soldiers, printing and distribution of new national security doctrine with a human rights component, human rights training courses for officers and soldiers in units throughout a national territory, and a 16-nation regional conference on human rights as the basis for combating terrorism.

In total, USSOUTHCOM has conducted over 60 HRI-related events involving thousands of participants. For those military forces that have implemented the HRI for a minimum of two years, USSOUTHCOM sponsors strategic progress assessment seminars (SPAS), thus completing the plan-execute-assess feedback loop. The SPAS provide a forum for partner-nation action officers to assess progress made on the comprehensive implementation plan, to identify successes and obstacles, and to formulate follow-on action plans. In this way, continuity of the process is ensured, and real world achievements can be measured.

## Partnership for the Americas

The unique process of the HRI has yielded a wealth of experiences and lessons.

The first lesson is the power of dialogue and collaboration between people of diverse backgrounds working toward a common goal based on shared values. Here, the Americas has a strong advantage. All of its member nations, save one, are democracies. This provides a powerful common framework from

which to work. Even mutual suspicion and distrust between military officers and civilians from human rights organizations, palpable during the first hours of every event, eventually wears away. The formula of breaking participants into small, diverse groups and giving them assignments calling for a consensus product in a short amount of time seems almost magic. By the end of every event, camaraderie and a sense of shared purpose prevail. It is not uncommon for conference managers to tell participants to stop working so they don't miss lunch or to break for the night so guards can lock up and go home. Participants often continue discussions on their own time after events have concluded. Such is the sense of mission, dedication to task, and enthusiasm for the projects developed in the HRI conferences held to date.

Second, the basis for forming a true Partnership of the Americas comes from an attitude based on genuine mutual respect. Human rights is an extremely sensitive subject in many, probably most, nations of the world. No nation has a perfect record, and the level of sensitivity toward any hint of criticism relates directly to how recently those abuses occurred and how severe they were. The HRI has continued to move forward, even in the polarized political atmosphere of the past few years, because the work is based on respect for all participants, whether they come from the human rights community, the military forces, or other institutions of the partner nations. The message is that all participants

are stakeholders working toward common goals based on shared values, and that all have valuable insights to share. It is a message HRI team members take care to communicate consistently, both in the words they choose and the actions they take. Partner-nation participants take the lead. USSOUTHCOM and secretariat personnel support and assist as requested.

The third and final lesson is that we must focus on the way ahead while understanding that the past provides the context in which



Colombian colleagues visit a human rights field training course at the Colombian NCO leadership school, Tolemaida, Colombia, November 2005.





USSOUTHCOM's LTC John Perez presents Paraguayan Senator Ana María Juanita Mendoza de Acha with a book detailing Human Rights Initiative achievements, Asuncion, Paraguay, March 2006.

military responses in these types of complex environments.

The Human Rights Initiative's success can be attributed to the strong desire of regional military forces to move forward in history, establishing better training, inculcating human rights into operational missions, and making a positive contribution to their societies. The abuses of the recent past remain fresh in military and civilian minds. The HRI is an essential tool for achieving the Americas' common vision for a better tomorrow: democracy, security, stability, and prosperity.

the HRI takes place. Events must not focus on seeking justice for previous human rights violations. That is the work of other organizations. Instead, HRI's objective should be to facilitate the creation and institutionalization of processes that will prevent future abuses.

The role of the military in a democratic society is clear. A military exists to ensure the security of the nation while obeying legitimate civilian authority and respecting the rights of citizens and non-citizens. Secondary missions include contributing to peaceful regional military cooperation and participating in peacekeeping operations around the world. However, resource constraints drive some governments to assign their military forces nontraditional missions such as disaster relief, environmental protection, riot control, SWAT operations, and support to traditional law enforcement. Indeed, some nontraditional missions are written into national constitutions and law. These nontraditional missions increase the potential for confusion and mistakes. Strong human rights programs are especially vital when conducting

## The Way Ahead

USSOUTHCOM is committed to working together with all interested countries of the Western Hemisphere to support HRI implementation. The command can provide technical support, training, conferences, seminars, and exchanges with human rights organizations, participating national governments, NGOs, and the private sector. In addition, USSOUTHCOM is working to strengthen interagency coordination with other U.S. Government agencies and exploring ways to branch out to achieve broader participation from partner-nation security forces.

Geography, history, trade, extended families, cultural ties, common threats, and even environmental conditions tie the nations of the hemisphere to a common destiny. Ensuring security in a manner consistent with democracy and respect for human rights is the common mission of all military and security forces of the hemisphere.

The U.S. Southern Command's intent is to remain on the forefront of human rights training, which will be fully integrated in everything it does. The Human Rights Initiative will be a key component of that training, as it is key to the Partnership for the Americas and essential to fulfilling that common mission. **MR**

***The Human Rights Initiative's success can be attributed to the strong desire of regional military forces to move forward in history...***

## NOTES

1. National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington, DC: The White House, 2006), 2.

2. Based in San José, Costa Rica, the Inter-American Institute is an autonomous international academic organization dedicated to the promotion of human rights through education and research.



# The SHIA REVIVAL

Vali Nasr

**T**HE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT in the Middle East today is the rise of sectarian conflict. This is a process that has begun in Iraq, but it will not end there. In Iraq it has become the single most important determinant of that country's future. However, it has already spread beyond Iraq, threatening stability in Lebanon as it shapes regional alignments and the regional balance of power.

The rise of sectarianism is an outcome of the Shia revival that followed the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. The war broke down the Sunni minority regime that had ruled that country for decades and empowered Shias, producing the first Arab Shia government in history and setting in motion a region-wide Shia revival. What began in Iraq quickly translated into a regional political dynamic as Shias everywhere looked to Iraq with hope for positive changes in their own countries.

In the wake of regime change in Iraq, the Shia have made their mark on regional politics. From Lebanon to the Persian Gulf, through peaceful elections and bloody conflicts, the Shia are making their presence felt. Shia politics were initially supportive of developments in Iraq. Senior Iraqi Shia leaders endorsed the political system the United States introduced to Iraq. Iraqi elections also received support from Iranian and Lebanese Shia religious leaders. Following the elections, Shias joined the American-backed government in Baghdad, and Shias joined the new Iraqi security forces in droves. Post-Saddam Iraq presented an opportunity for creating stable relations between the United States and Iraqi Shias and, by extension, with the Shia populations across the region.

Shiism split off from Sunnism in the seventh century over a disagreement about who the Prophet Muhammad's legitimate successors were. Over time, the two sects developed their own distinct conception of Islamic teachings and practices much as Catholicism and Protestantism have in Christianity since the medieval period. Shias are a minority of 10-15 percent of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims.

The overwhelming majority of Shias live in the arc from Lebanon to Pakistan—some 140 million people in all. They account for about 90 percent of Iranians, 65 percent of Iraqis, 40-45 percent of Lebanese, and a sizable portion of the people living in the Persian Gulf region (and around the region in East Africa, India, and Tajikistan). There are small Shia communities

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PHOTO: Iraqi supporters of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr shout slogans as they wave their national flags during an anti-U.S. rally, in Najaf, Iraq, 9 April 2007. (AFP Photo/Ahmad Al-Rubaye)

Country	Total population	Shia population	Percent of population that is Shia
Iran	68.7 million	61.8 million	90 percent
Pakistan	165.8 million	33.2 million	20 percent
Iraq	26.8 million	17.4 million	65 percent
India	1.09 billion	11.0 million	1 percent
Azerbaijan	8.0 million	6.0 million	75 percent
Afghanistan	31.1 million	5.9 million	19 percent
Saudi Arabia	27.0 million	2.7-4.0 million	10-15 percent
Lebanon	3.9 million	1.7 million	45 percent
Kuwait	2.4 million	730,000	30 percent
Bahrain	700,000	520,000	75 percent
Syria	18.9 million	190,000	1 percent
UAE	2.6 million	160,000	6 percent
Qatar	890,000	140,000	16 percent
Oman	3.1 million	31,000	1 percent

Source: Based on data from numerous scholarly references and from governments and NGOs in the Middle East and the West.

**Table 1. Shia population distribution in Middle East and South Asia.**

in southern and western Africa, South and North America, and Europe—mostly migrants. Iran is today the largest Shia country followed by Pakistan. Most Shias live from Iran to the east, where Arab Shias constitute only a minority of the faith. However, importantly, in the strategic arc stretching from Pakistan to Lebanon, there are as many Shias as there are Sunnis, and in the Persian Gulf region Shias clearly predominate.

However, despite this demographic weight, Shias have been by and large an invisible political force, excluded from power whether in the majority or minority. In the Middle East, the Sunnis had come to believe in their manifest destiny to rule. Iraq made Shia empowerment possible and, by the same token, challenged the Sunni conception of the sectarian balance of power in the region. The fury of the Sunni insurgency in Iraq, the cool reception for Iraq's new government in the Arab world, and the vehement anti-Shiism on display in the Arab Street all reflect anger at the rise of the Shia.

Whereas Sunnis reacted angrily to regime change in Iraq, Shias were far more willing to give the United States the benefit of the doubt. In Iraq, following the lead of their most senior spiritual leader,

the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Shias refrained from either resisting U.S. occupation or responding to the Sunni insurgency's provocations. Armed with religious decrees, Shias then joined the revamped security services and wholeheartedly participated in elections. Even conservative ayatollahs in Iran supported the elections, and Iran itself was the first of Iraq's neighbors to recognize the new Iraqi government and extend support to it. Elsewhere, Shias began to clamor for elections of their own, seeing promise in political reform and democracy. In Saudi Arabia, the voter turn-out rate in Shia regions was twice as high as the national average in the first elections in that country. In Lebanon and Bahrain, Shias called for "one man one vote," and even Iran—then led by a reformist president—offered broader cooperation with the United States. Iraq seemed to have provided the United States with an opening to build new ties with the other half of the Middle East's population. But that moment of opportunity passed, and by the end of 2006, Shia politics had adopted a different tenor.

It is now clear that the close relations the United States initially enjoyed with Shia parties and community leaders in Iraq gave way, by 2006, to greater



confrontation, and that Shia politics slipped from the hand of moderate forces and became dominated by radical militias and politicians. Nor was the trend limited to Iraq. There was a palpable turn in Shia attitudes in the region. While it was U.S. arms that made the Shia revival possible, it is increasingly Iran and anti-American gun-toting militias that are setting the tone for relations with the Shia. Facing growing instability in the Middle East, the United States has no greater challenge than to understand this rising force, why it could be turning away from America, and how to stop that from happening.

## The Legacy of 2006

The year 2006 was a fateful one for Shia politics. In Iraq, escalating sectarian conflict raised the stock of the radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, as his Mahdi Army militia spread its control over Baghdad and the Shia south. To the north, war with Israel emboldened Hezbollah just as it divided Lebanon along sectarian lines between Shias on the one side and a coalition of Christians and Sunnis on the other. After reformists failed to build on an opening of relations with the United States over Afghanistan—an opening evident in the collaboration between the United States and Iran at the Bonn conference that decided the fate of post-Taliban Afghanistan—they lost the presidency to the hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The new president quickly ratcheted up tensions with the United States. This, along with Iran's continued pursuit of its nuclear program, escalated tensions with the United States and raised the stakes for Washington in Iraq and Lebanon, where Shia forces rely on Iran for support. There is a sectarian thread that runs through all these conflicts, separating Shias from Sunnis in Iraq, Shias from Sunnis and Christians in Lebanon, and Iran from its Sunni Arab neighbors who sympathize with Sunnis in Iraq and Lebanon.

## The Making of Sectarianism

The sectarian force in Middle East politics began with the regime change in Iraq in 2003. A majority in Iraq, and suppressed by decades of Saddam's brutal dictatorship, the Shia were quick to take advantage of the U.S. coalition's invasion to lay claim to the country's future. They embraced the American promise of democracy as Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani ordered his followers to vote in Iraq's

elections and join its new government. Millions of Shias showed up at ballot boxes to transform Iraq into the first Arab Shia state. That inspired Shias—but not so the Sunnis—to clamor for more rights and influence wherever they lived, challenging centuries-old political establishments that had kept them on the margins.

The change in Shia fortunes has met with Sunni resistance. In Iraq, an equally anti-American and anti-Shia insurgency quickly organized to plunge the country into violence and ensnare the United States in a stalemate. Car bombs targeted Shia markets, police recruits, mosques, and religious figures. The violence aimed at intimidating Shias who were seen as collaborating with the coalition. For two years Shias showed remarkable restraint—although there were sporadic retaliations—in the face of bloody provocations by the Sunni insurgency. But the ferocity of the attacks eventually took its toll—on both the United States and the increasingly frustrated Shias. In late 2005, once it became clear that elections were not going to end the insurgency, the United States turned to Sunni politicians who had boycotted the elections. The U.S. hope was that Sunni cooperation would weaken the insurgency. The new approach included more public criticism of Shia political leaders and the government, and greater attention to Shia militias.

The Shia did not take kindly to the new strategy and interpreted it as a sign of weakening American resolve caused by frustration at the ferocity of the insurgency and successful lobbying in Washington by Arab governments. Their anxiety turned into anger in February 2006 when a massive bomb destroyed the Golden Mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest Shia shrines. Wary Shias balked at calls for restraint, which they saw as only emboldening the insurgency. Militias with vengeance on their minds stepped into the breach to promise protection to a community that was rapidly losing its trust in the political process and the United States. The war between the insurgency and the United States thus became the war between the insurgency, the United States, and Shia militias. The U.S. military found itself on the same side as Shia militias in the larger fight against the Sunni insurgency, but then confronted those militias as it tried to stop sectarian violence.

Washington pressed Shia leaders to rein in their militias, but to no avail. They saw the insurgency



AFP

**Lebanese supporters of the Shiite militia Hezbollah chant anti-U.S. slogans during a protest in front of the government house in Beirut, where a U.S. envoy was meeting with Lebanese officials, 14 January 2006.**

as the source of the violence and insisted the United States focus on disarming it. But U.S. attention was shifting to bringing security to Baghdad and hence away from the insurgency. Growing tensions eventually weakened moderate Shia voices as more and more Shias saw the U.S. engagement of Sunnis as a failure. The insurgency was stronger a year after Sunnis joined the political process—bombing Shia neighborhoods at will and accounting for 80 percent of U.S. casualties by the end of 2006. Turning Shia politics away from radicalism requires not just breaking the hold of Shia militias, but also rolling back the insurgency—the fear of which produces support for the militias. The challenge before the new U.S. strategy is to accomplish this exact task.

## **Beyond Iraq: The Revival's Implications**

The sectarian conflict in Iraq has implications for the whole Middle East. Long before Americans recognized sectarianism as a problem, it was already shaping attitudes beyond Iraq's borders. Not long after Saddam fell from power, King Abdullah of Jordan warned of an emerging Shia crescent stretching from Beirut to Tehran. Shia power and Sunni reaction to it was on everyone's mind, and the fear was that it would seep into the soil in the region.

That fear came true during the month-long war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006. The war turned Hezbollah and Iran into regional power brokers and sent jubilant Shias into the streets in Iraq, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Unable to influence the course of events, Sunni powers Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt found themselves pushed to the sidelines. The war even caught Al-Qaeda off-guard as it watched Hezbollah steal some of its thunder. The reaction of Sunni rulers and radicals was swift: they denounced Hezbollah's campaign as an Iranian-sponsored Shia power grab. The war popularized Hezbollah on the Sunni Arab street, but that did not close the sectarian divide that the fighting

had exposed, especially as cease-fire tensions in Lebanon escalated in the following months, raising the possibility of yet another sectarian conflict in the region.

The Lebanon war showed that Iraq has rewritten the rules in the Middle East, adding sectarian loyalties to the mix to decide where allegiances lie. For the United States the war was a low point. It undermined U.S. prestige across the region, and Washington lost much of the goodwill it had gained with the Shia following the Iraq war. Shia views of America hardened as Washington refused to push for a cease-fire while the war devastated Shia towns, villages, and neighborhoods.

For Washington, developments in Lebanon and Iraq are part of the larger challenge of dealing with Iran. Iran sees itself as a great power, and it is pursuing the nuclear capability that would confirm this self-image. Since 2003 it has shown a more confident but also more radical face. President Ahmadinejad appears to take seriously the old revolutionary goal of positioning Iran as the leading country of the entire Muslim world—an ambition that requires focusing on hostility to Israel and the West, which tends to bring Arabs and Iranians, Sunni and Shia, together rather than divide them even as it demands efforts to push traditional Arab Sunni allies of the West off to the sidelines. Ahmadinejad has increased tensions

with the West with his brazen criticisms of the United States, tough talk on the nuclear issue, and virulent attacks on Israel. This has worried Washington, which sees Iran as a negative influence in Lebanon and Iraq, where it has accused Iran of supplying Shia militias with deadly weapons. Washington is not alone. Israel is nervous about Iran's nuclear intentions. Sunni Arab governments, too, fear that Iran will overshadow them regionally, and in the Persian Gulf, monarchies worry about the spread of an aggressive Iranian hegemony over their domains. The prospect of Tehran dictating security and oil policy and, most worrisome, intervening on behalf of local Shia populations, has Sunni rulers across the region pressing Washington to confront Iran.

The United States sees Iran through the prism of the impasse over its nuclear program; but Iran is important to a broader set of American concerns in the Middle East, from Iraq and Afghanistan, to the Arab-Israeli conflict, to oil prices. Tehran benefited from America's toppling of the Taliban and Saddam regimes, which were significant barriers to Iranian ambition and influence. As the occupation of Iraq constrained American power and tarnished American prestige, Iran seized the opportunity to spread its wings. Rising Iranian clout has been entwined with the Shia revival that swept across the Middle East in the wake of the Iraq and Lebanon wars. The United States sees Iranian moral and material support for Iraq's Shia parties and militias as destabilizing, but can do little to stop it. However, it is not Iraq that has most vividly showcased Iran's regional reach and ambitions, but the summer war between Israel and Hezbollah. Having supported Hezbollah and supplied it with sophisticated weaponry, Iran not surprisingly basked in the glory at the expense of the Sunni regimes that had condemned the Shia movement. Iran's shadow continues to loom large over Lebanon as Hezbollah is tightening its grip on Lebanon and the specter of civil war has come back to haunt the country.

What Iran sowed in Lebanon, it expects to reap in Iraq. Washington is debating the merits of talking to Iran about Iraq at a time when Tehran has hinted that it holds most of the cards, suggesting that if the



**Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (center) leaves the Friday prayers at Tehran University, 30 March 2007.**

AFP

United States wants to deal with Iran—not only over Iraq but also over Lebanon, the Palestinian issue, or Afghanistan—it has to accept Tehran's terms for such an engagement. It was with a view to reverse this attitude that Washington escalated pressure on Iran in the first months of 2007, hoping to convince Tehran that there are limits to its influence and that it would likely face a high cost if it were to overreach.

The United States faces an increasingly fractious Middle East in the grip of old and new conflicts, each with its own issues and tempo, but all connected to the broader Shia revival and the Sunni reaction to it apparent in the sectarian conflict in Iraq. To get the Middle East right, Washington must understand this new force and how it is shaping the region. Only then will it be able to appropriately manage the multiple conflicts that are unfolding in the region, the alignments that they will produce, and the impact that they will have on U.S. interests. **MR**





# Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, **FIFTH EMERGES**

Colonel T. X. Hammes, USMC, Retired

**S**EVENTEEN YEARS AGO, a small group of authors introduced the concept of “Four Generations of War.” Frankly, the concept did not get much traction for the first dozen years. Then came 9/11. Some of the fourth-generation warfare (4GW) proponents claimed that the Al-Qaeda attacks were a fulfillment of what they had predicted. However, most military thinkers, for a variety of reasons, continued to dismiss the 4GW concept. In fact, about the only place 4GW was carefully discussed was on an Al-Qaeda website. In January 2002, one ‘Ubed al-Qurashi quoted extensively from two *Marine Corps Gazette* articles about 4GW.<sup>1</sup> He then stated, “The fourth generation of wars [has] already taken place and revealed the superiority of the theoretically weak side. In many instances, these wars have resulted in the defeat of ethnic states [*duwal qawmiyah*] at the hands of ethnic groups with no states.”

Essentially, one of Al-Qaeda’s leading strategists stated categorically that the group was using 4GW against the United States—and expected to win. Even this did not stimulate extensive discussion in the West, where the 9-11 attacks were seen as an anomaly, and the apparent rapid victories in Afghanistan and Iraq appeared to vindicate the Pentagon’s vision of high-technology warfare. It was not until the Afghan and Iraqi insurgencies began growing and the continuing campaign against Al-Qaeda faltered that serious discussion of 4GW commenced in the United States.

Yet today, even within the small community of writers exploring 4GW, there remains a range of opinions on how to define the concept and what its implications are. This is a healthy process and essential to the development of a sound concept because 4GW, like all previous forms of war, continues to evolve even as discussions continue. That brings me to the purpose of this article: to widen the discussion on what forms 4GW may take and to offer a possible model for the next generation of war: 5GW.

## Developments in 4GW

Current events suggest that there are a number of ongoing major developments in 4GW: a strategic shift, an organizational shift, and a shift in type of participants.

**Strategic shift.** Strategically, insurgent campaigns have shifted from military campaigns supported by information operations to strategic communications campaigns supported by guerrilla and terrorist operations. While there is no generally agreed upon definition of 4GW, according to the definition I wrote in 2003, “Fourth generation warfare uses all available networks—political, economic, social, and military—to convince the enemy’s political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit. It is an evolved form of insurgency.” The key concept in this definition is that 4GW opponents will attempt to directly attack the minds of

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enemy decision makers. The only medium that can change a person's mind is information. Therefore, information is the key element of any 4GW strategy. Effective insurgents build their plans around a strategic communications campaign designed to shift their enemy's view of the world.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that many insurgent groups understand this fact. Hezbollah's strategy during the 2006 summer war with Israel is an excellent example. During the fighting, they focused not on damaging Israel, but on insuring they were perceived as defying the most powerful army in the Middle East. Thus, the fact that Hezbollah fired as many rockets on the last day of the war as the first was critically important. They know 122mm rockets are notoriously inaccurate and cause little damage, but the rockets are highly visible. Their appearance "proved" the powerful Israeli Air Force and Army had not hurt Hezbollah badly.

Once the fighting stopped, Hezbollah showed an even greater grasp of strategic communications. While the West was convening conferences to make promises about aid at some future time, Hezbollah representatives hit the streets with cash money and physical assistance. To the Arab world, the contrast could not have been clearer. When Israel needed more weapons, the United States rushed them in by the planeload. When Arab families needed shelter and food, we scheduled a conference for some future date. Hezbollah acted—and gained enormous prestige by doing so. To insure they continued to dominate this critical communications campaign, Hezbollah physically prevented other agencies from distributing aid in Hezbollah areas. The message was clear—Hezbollah was sovereign in its territory and focused on its people. The contrast between that message and the usual apathy of Arab governments to their people's needs was stunning.

Hezbollah is not an isolated case. The high quality and enormous variety of insurgent web sites indicate many, if not most, insurgent groups understand the imperative

of executing an effective strategic communications campaign when trying to drive out an outside power. In contrast, the United States continues to flounder in its efforts at strategic communications.

This shift from Mao's three-phased insurgency to a strategic communications campaign has been developing since Ho Chi Minh's successful effort at breaking America's political will over Vietnam. Today, it is clearly the primary choice of insurgents faced with outside powers. However, just as Mao's strategic concept included a Phase III conventional battle to defeat the government, the new "coalitions of the willing" know they will also face a final phase. Theirs will be the civil war to decide who among them will control the country after the outside power is gone. Unfortunately, post-Soviet Afghanistan and today's Gaza Strip show that once the outside power is driven out, the civil war quickly devolves from 4GW to a traditional 2GW war of attrition.

**Organizational shift.** The emergence of civil war as a part of insurgency is based on the major organizational shift that has occurred since Mao formulated his concept. It reflects the continuous, worldwide shift from hierarchical to networked organizations. While the Chinese and Vietnamese



AFP, Denis Sinyakov

An Israeli fireman examines fires caused by Katyusha-style rockets fired by Hezbollah from southern Lebanon into the northern Israeli border town of Kiryat Shmona, 9 August 2006. Terrified and exhausted residents of the city fled from the daily rain of Hezbollah rockets in the first evacuation of an entire town since the creation of Israel.

insurgencies were hierarchies that reflected both the social organizations of those societies and the dominant business and military organizations of the time, recent insurgencies have been networked coalitions of the willing. For instance, in Iraq, there is no unifying concept among the various insurgent groups except to get Americans out of the country. While some of the more centrist groups could form a coalition government, clearly the Sunni Salafists and Shia religious militias cannot coexist if we are driven out; in fact, they are already fighting a civil war in anticipation of our departure. Other groups, such as criminal networks, cannot tolerate a strong central government of any kind—unless it is thoroughly corrupt and lets them continue their criminal activities.

The rise of networked coalitions is in keeping with the fact that both the societies in conflict and the dominant business organizations of our time are networks. Like society as a whole, insurgencies have become networked, transnational, and even trans-dimensional. Going beyond simple real-world networks, some elements of their organizations exist in the real world, some in cyberspace, and some in both dimensions.

**Shift in participants.** As part of the organizational shift, we have seen a change in who is fighting and why. It is essential for us to understand that, even within a single country, the highly diverse armed groups that make up a modern insurgency have widely differing motivations. Studying the motivation of a group gives us a strong indication of how that group will fight and what limits, if any, it will impose on its use of force. The UN's *Manual for Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups* states, "In terms of founding motivations, armed groups generally fall into three categories: they can be *reactionary* (reacting to some situation or something that members of the groups experienced or with which they identify); they can be *opportunistic*, meaning that they seized on a political or economic opportunity to enhance

their own power or positions; or they are founded to further *ideological* objectives."<sup>23</sup>

Reactionary groups often form when communities feel threatened. They tend to be sub-national or national groups that operate in specific geographic areas and attempt to protect the people of those areas. In essence, these armed groups represent a return to earlier security arrangements; they are the result of a state's failure to fulfill its basic social contract of providing security for its population. The ethnic-sectarian militias we have seen develop around the world in response to insecurity are reactionary groups. The Tamil Tigers and Badr Militia are typical of the type.

*Reactionary groups* need to protect populations but lack the military power to do so. As a result, they usually resort to 4GW—but generally use only conventional arms. While highly effective, such weapons are familiar to Western armies and thus easier to anticipate and defeat. Reactionary groups also tend not to be a threat outside their areas since they are focused mainly on defending their own people. However, they still conduct sophisticated communication campaigns to defeat outside powers.

*Opportunistic groups* spring up to take advantage of a vacuum to seize power or wealth. Criminal by nature, these groups have been around for centuries. What is different now is that commercially available weapons allow them to overmatch all but the most well-armed police—they are even a match for the armed forces of some nations. Opportunistic groups include organizations like Mara Salvatrucha 13 (MS-13) and, increasingly, the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Opportunistic groups conduct their own strategic communications campaigns, usually citing a religious or national cause to claim legitimacy for their criminal activities.

A third great motivator, *ideology*, gives birth to the most dangerous armed groups—organizations like Al-Qaeda, Aryan Brotherhood, and Aum Shin-rikyo. Ideological groups are more dangerous to the United States than reactionary or opportunistic groups because of their no-limits approach to conflict. In the past, they have used society's assets against it. From Timothy McVeigh's bomb made of fertilizer and diesel fuel to Al-Qaeda's employment of airliners, ideological groups tend to be highly creative in their attacks. They are more likely to use society's infrastructure—chemical plants, mass

***Like society as a whole, insurgencies have become networked, transnational and even trans-dimensional.***

shipments of fertilizer, even biotechnology—as weapons of mass destruction than groups motivated by self-defense or opportunism.

Of even more concern is the fact that ideological groups are essentially impossible to deter. First, their “cause” provides moral justification, and sometimes a moral requirement, to use any available weapon. Second, they have no return address, so they do not fear massive retaliation—If Al-Qaeda detonates a nuclear device on U.S. soil, where exactly do we fire our nukes in return?

Ideological groups will not be deterred even by the danger inherent in the use of biological weapons. While other groups may hesitate to release a contagious biological agent for fear of killing their own people, ideological groups believe the higher power guiding their actions will either protect their members or call them home for their earned reward. Thus, the combination of extraordinarily rapid advances in biotechnology and the spread of ideologically driven armed groups represents a major threat to the global population.

While the UN manual cites three kinds of differently motivated insurgent groups, recent developments point to the advent of a fourth: a hybrid spurred by a blend of reactionary, ideological, and/or opportunistic motivations. Sometimes these groups are reactionary or ideological, but then turn to crime for funding. Al-Qaeda, for instance, is primarily an ideological group that has become increasingly opportunistic in order to subsidize its operations. The IRA started as a reactionary group, but it too has increasingly turned to crime—and may actually have moved from a reactionary to a purely opportunistic motivation.

Another kind of hybrid is the ideological group that finds itself *de facto* ruler of an area: by taking charge, it becomes bound to protect the community, just as reactionary groups must. The Jaysh Al Mahdi militia in Iraq is one such example.

Some groups can even fall into all three categories. For instance, Hamas and Hezbollah provide protection, espouse an ideology, and participate in crime for funding. In fact, most armed groups now use crime to fund operations.

The sad truth is that there is a truly alarming variety of armed groups active in the world today. Understanding their motivations, methods, and goals is becoming increasingly difficult.

## Weapons of Mass Destruction

Iraq has seen the development of another major refinement of 4GW: using more or less basic materials to create weapons of mass destruction (WMD). While Western intelligence agencies have long worried that the Iraqi insurgents would use industrial chemicals, only recently have they used chlorine as part of their attacks. Much like World War One’s combatants, the insurgents had to learn that it takes the right conditions and huge quantities of gas to create large numbers of casualties; however, they and their brethren around the world have shown a distinct ability to learn from each other, and now the Iraqi attacks are becoming increasingly effective. Although it might be nearly impossible to repeat, Al-Qaeda’s 9/11 operation with airliners was certainly a massively destructive attack forged from unconventional (nonnuclear, non-chemical, non-biological) WMD materials. In contrast to 9/11, the extensive availability of toxic industrial chemicals means that massive chemical attacks can be duplicated in many areas of the world.

What makes this WMD-like development particularly troubling is that some terrorist websites have discussed using chemical plants or shipments to cause the numbers of casualties that occurred, for instance, in Bhopal, India, in 1984, when fumes from an industrial gas leak enveloped the city, killing thousands. The 1947 disaster in Texas City, Texas, when a ship with 8,500 tons of ammonium nitrate on board blew up in port and killed nearly 600, is another possible template for achieving WMD-like effects. If either incident had been intentional, it would have qualified as a WMD attack. This move toward unconventional WMD development, coupled with the trend shown by the Iraqi insurgents’ increasingly effective use of chlorine, presents an immediate and major danger to U.S. interests both at home and overseas.

## Another New Player: Private Military Companies

A largely overlooked development in warfare is the exceptional increase in the use of private military companies (PMCs). These organizations have always been around, but during the last two decades they have become central to the way the United States wages war. There has been very little consideration given to how PMCs might impact





**A locomotive and debris after the 1947 Texas City Disaster.**  
Reprint, with permission, from Moore Memorial Public Library, Texas City, Texas.

international relations in general and war in particular. While we have focused on the monetary and political cost-cutting benefits of PMCs, other nations are discovering creative ways to use them to avoid normal international constraints on the use of force.

Of particular concern is the use of armed contractors. The length of this article prevents a full exploration of the numerous implications that flow from the increased use of armed contractors, so I will simply offer some thoughts to start a discussion. For instance, How does one hold a country accountable for the actions of an armed PMC? How will these companies change the face of armed conflict? What impact will they have on the relationship between the rulers of resource-rich countries and their populations? Can they be employed to provide bases or major forward-deployed combat assets?

PMC spokesmen have continually reassured us that their companies are responsible organizations that are working with governments to devise effective regulations for PMC employment. This is, in fact, true. However, while the United States has moved to increase the accountability of such companies through regulations and contracts, these methods have yet to be seriously tested. Further, much like the shipping industry avoids regulation by registering under flags of convenience, we can expect PMCs to do the same: if regulations interfere with how they wish to operate, they will move to another country or even dissolve their corporations and start again as different legal entities in different countries. We have already seen a number of PMCs do exactly that.

The sudden presence of PMCs in numerous conflicts worldwide presents some interesting challenges

to the international community. In the more than 300 years since the Treaty of Westphalia, we have developed diplomatic, economic, and military techniques for dealing with crises created when nation-states use armed force—or even threaten to use it. We do not have such mechanisms in place when nation-states or even private individuals employ armed contractors. If China had announced that it planned to send multiple field armies to Angola to assist with security and construction there, the UN would at least have opened up a dialogue. Yet a Chinese company has signed a contract to do just that, except that it will substitute 850,000 armed and unarmed contractors for the field armies. This event has simply not shown up in international discussion. It is particularly interesting because China has just signed a 10-year contract with Angola to purchase oil at \$60 a barrel. While the contractors are not an official branch of the Chinese Government, their presence clearly puts China in position to “resolve” any disputes with the Angolan Government over that contract. Thus, thanks to the creative use of PMCs, brokering agreements between nation-states and even the process of intervening to resolve disputes between parties has moved outside the international system. How does the UN respond to a contract dispute between an armed private company and a government?

Another interesting development is that “governments” of countries with resource-rich areas can employ PMCs to seize and hold the rich areas while they ignore the rest of the country. We have already seen this with local militias and “blood diamonds,” but have not seen it applied in a systematic way. That may be happening now in the Sudan, where the Sudanese Government has hired Chinese firms to secure Sudan’s oil facilities. These firms not only provide reliable security, but also have no qualms about how the Sudanese Government chooses to conduct its internal affairs. By using PMCs, a very small minority can control a country without any regard to the needs of the majority. A clique can always seize power through a coup, but it takes trusted security forces to keep the resulting governments in power. In some parts of the world, security forces are likely to be loyal to their own clans or tribes, so the government must take care of those tribes. Now, though, governments have the option of hiring an effective PMC and completely ignoring any parts of the country that are not profitable—they

won't need the people to insure their continued rule. The result will be a significant increase in the ungoverned and desperately poor areas of the world. Also reinforcing the power of an oppressive minority is the international community's policy of dealing with whatever gang controls a country's capital city. With little likelihood of outside intervention, the oppressed and poor will have to resort to violence.

PMCs can also be used to establish forward operating bases or can even be deployed as forward forces. In the same way the British used the East India Company to establish a navy, an army, and supporting bases in India, other nations such as China are using commercial entities throughout the world to protect or advance their interests. Chinese PMCs already constitute a major ground presence in Africa, and with Chinese commercial entities building ports all along the shipping lanes from the Middle East to China, China could employ naval PMCs, at least nominally, to provide security against pirates. In fact, in early March the Chinese signed a contract with Somalia to train and equip a Somali coast guard. Such naval forces will obviously need maintenance and support facilities, which the companies will build. In effect, China's PMCs can establish a chain of naval facilities complete with ships near the chokepoints of major sea routes.

PMCs cannot be easily categorized as belonging to a particular generation of war. Rather, they are a tool that can be used in a wide variety of ways. But because 4GW succeeds by avoiding an opponent's military strength, PMCs offer the intriguing possibility of a weak country employing them in a 4GW manner, so that war doesn't look like war, but like business.

The final alarming fact about PMCs is that they are *businesses*. As such, they compete by focusing on quality, reliability, and cost. China can match Western firms on the first two and, based on a huge population of unemployed young men, can severely undercut Western firms on cost. Further, China has a huge incentive to subsidize businesses like PMCs: its one child policy has resulted in over 20 million more Chinese men of marriageable age than Chinese women.

Criminals are yet another player in 4GW. Most 4GW discussions still focus on politically motivated insurgent groups, however, as discussed in the 1989 *Gazette* article on 4GW, criminal organizations are

using 4GW techniques. A good example is Mara Salvatrucha 13 (MS-13). This organization started out primarily as a criminal movement, but it is now establishing effective political control in widely scattered locations. From some communities in El Salvador and Honduras to neighborhoods in American cities and even some American suburbs, MS-13 is creating sovereignty in non-contiguous territory. Much like their commercial predecessors the Hanseatic League, MS-13 has used violence and wealth generated by trade (primarily drugs) to create enclaves within national territories.

## State Use of 4GW

China's employment of PMCs is a clear example of a state using 4GW. Iran has taken a very different approach. Last summer, it introduced the West to the concept of lateral asymmetric escalation. As the United States continued to raise the pressure for UN action in response to Iran's nuclear program, Iran seized the opportunity presented by the Israel-Hezbollah confrontation in Lebanon to change the discussion. While we do not think that Iran instigated the war, we know it has considerable influence over Hezbollah and certainly provided extensive support to that group's efforts against the Israelis. In Hezbollah, Israel faced a 4GW enemy that made effective use of relatively high-technology weapons to challenge Israel's assumed military superiority. External to Lebanon, Iran cooperated with Syria to provide extensive logistical and perhaps intelligence support to the Hezbollah command. Because the United States and UN apparently can deal with only one crisis at a time, Iran was able to use the conflict in Lebanon in a 4GW manner to stop action against its nuclear program. Obviously, this was not a long-term solution for the Iranians, but it furthered their apparent strategic goal of buying time to develop a nuclear weapon.

## 4GW Updated

Since the 1989 *Gazette* article, the Afghan and Iraqi insurgents have continued to shift their strategic focus to the 4GW aspect of strategic communications. Organizationally, the insurgents are evolving into an ever-increasing variety of armed groups linked into coalitions of the willing. Also, the types of players and their motivations have changed significantly over time.

As a result, the coalitions of the willing we are facing in Iraq and Afghanistan are much more challenging than their monolithic predecessors. The proliferation of motivations and merging of ideological, reactionary, and opportunistic groups makes it increasingly difficult to tell who is fighting and why. Fortunately, the bottom line remains effective security and governance for the people, and the new counterinsurgency field manual (FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*) provides solid guidance on how to achieve that. Unfortunately, the sheer number of people involved in the two conflicts precludes the United States from realizing the recommended ratio of one security officer to every 50 citizens that has generally meant success in the past. To deal with the numerous changes in 4GW, we will have to find new ways to provide security while building the political coalitions that are the only way to defeat an insurgency. We will also have to apply our diplomatic, economic, and political resources more broadly and effectively than we have done in the past to deal with the expanding nation-state use of 4GW.

## Fifth Generation Warfare

*“Military institutions and the manner in which they employ violence depended on the economic, social and political conditions of their respective states.” —Clausewitz<sup>4</sup>*

Like always, the old generations of war continue to exist even as new ones evolve. Today, we see grim 2GW firepower-attrition battles in parts of Africa even as the first hints of 5GW emerge. This should not be surprising—countries that lack the political, social, and economic systems to support new forms of war will continue to use the older

forms. Yet a new generation must also evolve and, given the fact that 4GW has been the dominant form of warfare for over 50 years, it’s time for 5GW to make an appearance. We should be able to get some idea of what this new form of war will be by examining how political, social, and economic systems have changed since 4GW became dominant.

Politically, there have been major changes in who fights wars. The trend has been and continues to be downward from nation-states using huge, uniformed armies to small groups of like-minded people with no formal organization who simply choose to fight. We have slid so far away from national armies that often it is impossible to tell 4GW fighters from simple criminal elements. Many of the former are, in fact, criminal elements—either they use crime to support their cause or they use their cause to legitimize their crime.

Economically, we have seen a steady increase in the power of information. Insurgent groups have seized on the improving information grid to execute the strategic communications campaigns that are central to their victories. The content and delivery of information has accordingly shifted from the mass propaganda of Mao to highly tailored campaigns enabled by the new methods of communication and new social patterns. Insurgents have been quick to exploit such powerful communication tools as the cell phone and the Internet for recruiting, training, communicating, educating, and controlling new members. They have shifted from mass mobilization to targeted individual mobilization.

Today’s key businesses are becoming ever more productive because of their access to or manipulation of information. One result has been a proliferation of small companies that have created great wealth, a phenomenon in accordance with the long-term trend of power devolving downward to smaller entities—whether they are business or military. The epitome of this tendency is that just two guys essentially created Google.

Communications is not the only burgeoning sector with implications for 5GW. Two industries with even greater potential to change our world—biotechnology and nanotechnology—are on the verge of huge growth.

In many ways military and business problems are merging as the world becomes more interconnected and power is driven downward. In 2006, a

***To deal with the numerous changes in 4GW, we will have to find new ways to provide that essential security while building the political coalitions that are the only way to defeat an insurgency.***

group of about 20 angry Nigerians took hostages from a Shell oil platform in the Gulf of Guinea. Shell shut down its Nigerian Delta production and world oil prices rose dramatically. The interconnected world is highly vulnerable to disruptions in key commodities, and business issues can very rapidly become matters of serious international security. This is not the same as in the old banana wars, when Marines were consistently committed to protect American interests that mattered only to a few stockholders. Today, very small armed groups can impact the entire world's economy immediately and dramatically.

Socially, we have seen a major shift in how communities are formed. People are changing allegiance from nations to causes, a trend dramatically accelerated by Internet connectivity. In fact, many people are much more engaged in their online causes than in their real-world communities. Of particular concern are members of groups who are willing to go to extremes to advance their causes—from the woman who lived in a redwood for two years to suicide bombers. Such actors place their causes above any rational analysis of the impact of their actions—and they can be found through the Internet.

In sum, political, economic, and social trends point to the emergence of super-empowered individuals or small groups bound together by love for a cause rather than a nation. Employing emerging technology, they are able to generate destructive power that used to require the resources of a nation-state.

All of these new developments are of particular concern because emerging political, business, and social structures have consistently been more successful employing nascent technology than older, established organizations. Today, two emerging technologies, nanotechnology and biotechnology, have the power to alter our world, and warfare, even more fundamentally than information technology. Most writers agree it will be 20 years or more before nanotech hits full stride, so I will not discuss it further. In contrast, today's biotechnology can give small groups the kind of destructive power previously limited to superpowers.<sup>5</sup>

The October 2001 anthrax attack on Capitol Hill may have been the first 5GW attack. Given the enormous investigative effort expended on finding the perpetrator(s) and the fact that we have not made a single arrest, one has to believe the attack was

executed by an individual or a very small group. Had more people had been involved, someone would have leaked information or been found.

If this is a valid assumption, then we had a super-empowered individual or small group attack the legislative body of a nation-state using an advanced biological weapon in support of an unknown cause. This individual or group disrupted the operation of Congress for several months, created hundreds of millions of dollars in clean-up costs, and imposed mail screening requirements (and associated costs) that are still in effect today—not a bad payoff for a few ounces of anthrax and some postage.

The anthrax attack provided stark evidence that today a single individual can attack a nation-state. Over time, the combination of political motivation, social organization, and economic development has given greater and greater destructive capability to smaller and smaller groups. While some technologists thought we had reached a peak of destructive power with the advent of thermonuclear weapons, the fact remains that creating and delivering such weapons required an elaborate and expensive developmental effort. By contrast, the following recent



Clean-up personnel use a HEPA vacuum in a congressional office after the anthrax incident on Capitol Hill in 2001.



developments suggest that the potentially massive destructive power of bio-weapons is within reach of motivated groups:

- Three years ago, a team led by Dr. Craig Venter created a functioning virus from off-the-shelf chemicals. Venter's team selected a specific virus, purchased the necessary genetic base pairs to make the virus, and then "assembled" the pairs into a functioning synthetic virus. All of the materials and equipment the team used are commercially available without restrictions. Venter has predicted that what took an elite team and a very well-equipped lab to do the first time could be done by any competent graduate student in a university lab in less than a decade.

- Paul Boutin, a science writer, decided to take up Venter's "challenge." Despite not having been in a biology lab since high school, Boutin, with a little guidance from Dr. Roger Brent to keep him out of dangerous experiments, created glowing yeast. While yeast is not smallpox, the equipment, techniques, and nucleotides Boutin used are similar to those needed to create smallpox from its base pairs.<sup>6</sup>

- The complete smallpox genome has been published online and is widely available. Boutin found it in about 15 minutes.

- The nucleotides to make smallpox can be purchased from a variety of suppliers without identity verification.

- Smallpox has about 200,000 base pairs. DNA with up to 300,000 base pairs has already been successfully synthesized.

- An Australian research team heated up mousepox virus by activating a single gene. The modification increased its lethality from 30 percent to over 80 percent. It is even lethal to 60 percent of an immunized population. They posted their result on the Internet. It turns out smallpox has the same gene.

- The cost of creating a virus is dropping exponentially. If Carson's Curve continues to hold true, the cost of a base pair will drop to between 1 and 10 cents within the decade. Thus, a researcher could order all the necessary base pairs to create a smallpox virus for between \$2,000 and \$20,000.<sup>7</sup> The equipment he needs to assemble the virus will cost an additional \$10,000.

- Bio-hackers are following in the footsteps of their info-hacker predecessors. They are setting up labs in their garages and creating products. Last year,

a young British researcher invested \$50K in equipment and produced two new biological products. He then sold his company, Agribiotics, for \$22 million. We can assume hundreds, if not thousands, of young biology students are now in their basements attempting to make new biological products.

These discrete but related events mean that it is becoming increasingly easier for a small group and perhaps even an individual to create a virus such as smallpox and use it as a weapon.

Some experts have reassured us that even if a small group can create a biological virus, it is the testing, storage, and dissemination that are the most difficult steps in weaponizing a biological entity. They are right—if the creator uses traditional methods. However, a person can avoid the requirement for testing by selecting a known lethal agent, such as smallpox. He already knows it can thrive outside the laboratory. Storage and dissemination problems can be solved by tapping into the increasing trend of suicide attacks worldwide—he simply injects the smallpox directly into suicide volunteers, who become both the storage and the dissemination systems.

Using a few volunteers and commercial airlines, a terrorist group can create a near-simultaneous worldwide outbreak of smallpox. *Dark Winter*, an exercise conducted in 2001, simulated a smallpox attack on three U.S. cities. In a period of 13 days, smallpox spread to 25 states and 15 countries in several epidemiological waves, after which one-third of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who contracted the disease died. It was estimated that a fourth generation of the disease would leave 3 million infected and 1 million dead. The exercise was terminated at that time.<sup>8</sup>

It is essential to remember that not only will smallpox cause an exceptional number of deaths, but it will also shut down world trade until the epidemic is controlled or burns itself out. Given that the 2002 West Coast longshoreman's strike cost the U.S. economy \$1 billion per day, the cost of a complete shutdown of all transportation will be catastrophic.

Biological weapons have the capability to kill many more people than a nuclear attack. Further, unlike nuclear weapons, which are both difficult and relatively expensive to build, smallpox will soon be both inexpensive to produce and difficult to detect until released. While I selected smallpox for this

brief paper, a biologist can obviously select any of the known effective contagions. He can also attempt to create an entirely new disease. But of course no one can predict how a lab-raised disease will fare against the natural enemies it will face when released into the environment. Thus, a terrorist is more likely to use an existing disease or modify one to be more lethal. He can also release both versions of the disease—the naturally occurring virus and the enhanced virus—to insure success.

## Summary

Drawing on changes in the political, economic, social, and technical fields, 1GW culminated in the massed-manpower armies of the Napoleonic era. In the same way, 2GW used the evolution to an industrial society to make firepower the dominant form of war. Next, 3GW took advantage of the political, economic, and social shifts from an industrial to a mechanical era to make mechanized warfare dominant. Fourth-generation warfare uses all the shifts from a mechanical to an information/electronic society to maximize the power of insurgency. It continues to evolve along with our society as a whole, thus making 4GW increasingly dangerous and difficult for Western nations to deal with.

Fifth-generation warfare will result from the continued shift of political and social loyalties to causes rather than nations. It will be marked by the increasing power of smaller and smaller entities and the explosion of biotechnology. 5GW will truly be a nets-and-jets war: networks will distribute the key information, provide a source for the necessary equipment and material, and constitute a field from which to recruit volunteers; the jets will provide for worldwide, inexpensive, effective dissemination of the weapons.

The contagion scenario I described above is among the more devastating possible, but smallpox is only one weapon a super-empowered small group could use to attack society. They may use any

***Fifth-generation warfare will result from the continued shift of political and social loyalties to causes rather than nations. It will be marked by the increasing power of smaller and smaller entities and the explosion of biotechnology.***

number of evolving technologies. The key fact to remember is that changes in the political, economic, social, and technical spheres are making it possible for a small group bound together by a cause to use new technologies to challenge nation-states. We cannot roll back those changes, nor can we prevent the evolution of war. Clearly, we as a Nation, and particularly our military, are not ready to counter the coming attacks. It's time to start thinking about how we might deal with this next step in warfare. **MR**

## NOTES

1. See William S. Lind, et al, "The Changing Face of War Into the Fourth Generation," *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 1989. See also Thomas X. Hammes, "The Evolution of War: The Fourth Generation," *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 1994.

2. I have intentionally chosen to use "strategic communications campaign" instead of "information campaign" for two reasons. First, the Pentagon's definition of information operations states that "the principal goal is to achieve and maintain information superiority for the US and its allies." Unfortunately, it sees information primarily as computer and communications security and exploitation. Second, the very phrase "information operations" leads one to focus on the tactical or operational level. In contrast, "strategic communications" by definition falls at the strategic level of war and subsequent operational and tactical efforts must support that strategic approach.

3. United Nations *Manual for Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups*, 16.

4. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1989), 6.

5. There has already been extensive discussion about cyber attacks, so I will not deal with that threat in this short article. However, such attacks are an option for small groups—to include the physical destruction of key fiber-optic switches and cables using simple breaking-and-entering-techniques.

6. "Biowar for Dummies," <[http://paulboutin.weblogger.com/stories/storyReader\\$1439](http://paulboutin.weblogger.com/stories/storyReader$1439)>.

7. Robert Carlson, "The Pace and Proliferation of Biological Technologies," *Biosecurity and Bioterrorism: BioDefense Strategy, Practice and Science*, Volume 1, Issue 3, 2003.

8. Mark Mientka, "Dark Winter Teaches Bio Lessons," <[www.usmedicine.com/article.cfm?articleID=322&issueID=33](http://www.usmedicine.com/article.cfm?articleID=322&issueID=33)>.

# COUNTERINSURGENCY DIPLOMACY: Political Advisors at the Operational and Tactical Levels

Dan Green



*In the conventional war, military action, seconded by diplomacy, propaganda, and economic pressure, is generally the principal way to achieve the goal. Politics as an instrument of war tends to take a back seat and emerges again—as an instrument—when the fighting ends . . . The picture is different in the revolutionary war. The objective being the population itself, the operations designed to win it over (for the insurgent) or to keep it at least submissive (for the counterinsurgent) are essentially of a political nature. In this case, consequently, political action remains foremost throughout the war. It is not enough for the government to set political goals, to determine how much military force is applicable, to enter into alliances, or to break them; politics becomes an active instrument of operation. And so intricate is the interplay between the political and the military actions that they cannot be tidily separated; on the contrary, every military move has to be weighed with regard to its political effects, and vice versa.*

—David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*.<sup>1</sup>

*That's something the State Department is supposed to handle, but I was the Marine platoon commander, and I had to decide.*

—Iraqi war veteran Nathaniel Fick on whether or not to support a local mullah and distribute fresh water to a Baghdad neighborhood.<sup>2</sup>

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PHOTO: The author observing the counting of ballots for the Uruzgan Provincial Council and Parliamentary elections in Afghanistan in 2005. (courtesy of the author.)

**F**AILURE TO INCORPORATE political goals and requirements into military action has often slowed or even prevented the timely resolution of conflicts. This has especially been the case in the insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq, where we initially proceeded as if military power alone could achieve our aims. Political activity in concert with military operations, especially at the operational and tactical levels, will play a huge role in any favorable resolution of these conflicts and any future conflicts that fall under the rubric of unconventional warfare. The insurgencies we face today are, in part, a result of the sweeping political changes wrought by globalization and the relative decline of the nation-state as the basis for international order. Consequently, conventional military force alone will not achieve victory—there will be no battles between massive armies leading to a final resolution of the conflict. Nor will typical state-to-state diplomacy, in which conflict is resolved through a peace treaty, help stanch such insurgencies. In order to succeed, we must try a new approach.

In order to maintain our status as a leading nation and to defend and extend our interests, the United States must integrate military strategies with other

national capabilities to create a robust counterinsurgency capacity comprised of all elements of national power—economic, political, information, and military. Additionally, we must deploy these elements of national power at a much lower level and with a consistency that we have not yet seen in our present conflicts. If we do less than this, we will handicap ourselves in a fight against enemies whose borderless “state” is an ideology, ethnic or tribal identity, or religious viewpoint. The enemy does not, unfortunately, make the same clear distinctions we do between political and military strategies and tactics. He does not fight one-handedly, and neither should we.

## The Counterinsurgency Challenge

Counterinsurgency efforts have taken on an increasingly important role in the U.S. strategy to defeat global terrorism.<sup>3</sup> Since 2001, the budget of the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the command specializing in counterinsurgency, has increased from roughly \$3.8 billion to \$6.6 billion, and the number of its personnel has increased by 6,000, to 51,411.<sup>4</sup> Special operations forces (SOF) are deployed in well over a hundred countries, and in March 2005, President Bush put SOCOM in charge of “synchronizing” anti-terrorism efforts. With these additional resources, SOCOM has significantly increased the number of its Special Forces (SF), civil-affairs, and psychological operations units—all units deeply involved in counterinsurgency operations. Within the U.S. Army, the recent release of a revised counterinsurgency manual and the creation of a panel of counterinsurgency advisors and a counterinsurgency school in Iraq serve to underscore how much unconventional warfare has also affected the thinking and strategy of the conventional military.

With this shift in military priorities has come a concomitant, though tentative, movement in diplomatic priorities for the U.S. Department of State (DOS). DOS personnel are serving on provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) located throughout Afghanistan and Iraq, helping to facilitate reconstruction, development, and good governance while improving security. Some of these personnel are attached to U.S. conventional forces and are sometimes, along with members of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID),

United States Department of Agriculture, military civil-affairs units, and contract police advisors, collocated with SOF units. As of 2 October 2006, there were 20 DOS representatives in Afghanistan and 29 in Iraq advising PRT military commanders or leading PRTs and furthering U.S. foreign policy goals.<sup>5</sup> In Afghan provinces such as Uruzgan, the homeland of Taliban founder Mullah Omar and the site of an active Taliban insurgency, DOS personnel have played an integral role in a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy. What follows are some thoughts on how the DOS may want to incorporate its priorities more fully into a military effort. They are gleaned from the author’s one-year tour as the PRT political advisor (POLAD) in Uruzgan.

## Providing Political Leadership

In many conflict and post-conflict situations, a viable, effective government has all but disappeared. In some cases, it may have never existed at all. At the tactical and operational levels, a trained DOS employee can approximate many of the functions of a nascent government or extend the reach of an existing central host government by facilitating effective governance. Understanding how a local government functions as a viable and effective institution for the community, and knowing how a community operates, are critical to winning a counterinsurgency. To a significant degree, SF units have already incorporated these kinds of considerations into their counterinsurgency planning. However, the type of information that SF units typically collect in the field focuses largely on finding, fixing, and finishing the insurgent rather than specifically on improving governance for the long term. While the SF recognize that good governance, coupled with informed and targeted reconstruction and development projects, is integral to a successful counterinsurgency effort, they generally do not have experts

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who can implement durable programs. Because his training, background, experiences, and purpose are different from those of many SF members, a DOS employee focusing on political development can become a significant asset to a deployed SF unit. His contribution to the counterinsurgency effort can be as beneficial as kinetic operations, if not more so.

Decisions made by military units at the tactical level can often impact the strategic foreign policy goals of the U.S. Government. This tendency has been amply demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq. Aware of the government's policy priorities, a deployed DOS employee can provide increased direction to a unit as it confronts political, diplomatic, and civil-affairs problems. His guidance and input can be especially useful and important because the quick pace of military operations, especially during combat, often requires on-the-spot decisions that a U.S. embassy would be slow to make. Absent an embassy's presence, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom respectively, formal embassy decisions would be impossible to obtain. Because the DOS employee would be aware of the situation on the ground, this would also immeasurably improve the situational

awareness of the U.S. embassy, once one had been established, and of policy makers in Washington, D.C. And finally, because the chain of command for a DOS employee is considerably flatter than that of most military units, a field employee is perhaps one or two layers away from the ambassador and only an e-mail away from the embassy's staff; he can therefore quickly affect a host government's policies on key issues by persuading the embassy to engage with that country's president or relevant ministers. This capability is also useful to a host government, which can use the DOS employee to check up on its own forces or government employees, thus extending its own reach.

## Building and Empowering Local Institutions

Like members of the SF community, DOS personnel have received extensive cultural, regional, and language training and are skilled at interacting with citizens of other countries. However, as a civilian and a member of the DOS, I had diplomatic priorities that diverged somewhat from those of the warfighter. In Uruzgan Province, my political objectives were to develop governance, improve public administration, and facilitate successful parliamentary and provin-

cial council elections. At the same time, I presented U.S. foreign policy views to local leaders. To these ends, I focused my efforts on building the institution of the provincial shura, a traditional Afghan meeting of tribal elders, which had been reestablished in March 2005 after the Taliban had banned it 11 years earlier. With over 35 members drawn from each of Uruzgan's five districts, the shura was the closest thing to a representative body in the area prior to the fall parliamentary and provincial council elections. By regularly attending its meetings and interacting with its members, I was able to act as an intermediary between tribal and district leaders and the SF and PRT on a range of issues.

One of the key benefits of engaging with the provincial shura, working with its members from various



DOS

Afghan women line up outside a voting place during the successful parliamentary and provincial elections held on 18 September 2005.

tribes, and bolstering it as a representative institution was the positive effect it had on our security operations. Whenever the SF detained an Afghan, for example, shura members would typically ask me to intervene on his behalf, often telling me the background of the person and why he was a community member of good standing. That said, given a chance, the Afghans will use the SF against personal rivals and against rival clan interests, and so I had to be circumspect. I was extremely careful not to come across as trying to tell the SF why they should release someone; instead, I merely gave them the added information to provide some local perspective on why a person might have been detained for reasons other than their being a member of the Taliban. This approach proved particularly successful in helping to release a prospective parliamentary candidate who had been detained largely based upon information from a political opponent.

The shura also functioned as an excellent means of controlling rumors and allowing the community to vent about U.S. military operations. The information we gathered enabled SF and coalition forces to take the pulse of the community and, if needed, to alter their operations with local views in mind. In sum, the shura was useful because it allowed the Afghans to exert some influence on military operations in their community, pass information to the

SF on Taliban movements, and give voice to community frustrations about the security situation.

One key goal the PRT had for the shura was developing its ability to hold provincial government leaders accountable for their actions. On the third and final day of the meeting, provincial directors were invited to speak about their programs, policies, and concerns. The presentations usually followed a two-day session in which shura members would discuss the area's various public issues. For example, because shura members were very concerned about security in Uruzgan, they were interested in getting the local police to go on more patrols in the area, to hold criminals for their full prison term, and to set up more security checkpoints.

As a political officer, I worked behind the scenes to make sure local officials attended the shura and were ready to address its members' complaints. I also made sure that representatives from the PRT, SF, and the Afghan National Army, along with local elections officials, attended and were prepared to deliver presentations on their activities. I gave the local radio reporter, who had been badly injured fighting the Russians, a ride to the shura, and I provided him with a tape recorder, fresh tapes, and, once a month, a box of fresh batteries. My goals were to empower the shura as a legitimate voice of the people, democratize decision making in the

province, connect the shura to the people by radio, and continue to incorporate accountability into local governance. The relationships I created with these men helped the PRT and SF gain a better understanding of local politics and the relationships between different tribes and individuals. DOS personnel, and civilians in particular, are well qualified to conduct these types of activities, and the information gathered from the shura helped improve coalition planning immensely.

The PRT also focused on facilitating the development of civil society in Uruzgan Province, worked to attract non-governmental organizations to the area, and sometimes took the initiative to



DOS

**An Afghan man waits to receive a ballot from an election worker during the 2005 parliamentary and provincial elections.**

create non-governmental institutions. Regarding the latter, I met with local public officials and business leaders about their interest in creating a chamber of commerce for the provincial capital of Tarin Kowt. Because many locals were familiar with such an institution from their experiences in Kandahar City, they supported the idea. The inaugural meeting of the chamber took place in the Tarin Kowt mayor's office in spring 2005 and included merchants, bazaar shop owners, fuel distributors, building contractors, and taxicab and jingle truck drivers. (A jingle truck is a brightly painted cargo truck whose panels and bumpers are elaborately decorated with chimes, bells, and other ornaments.)

The meeting allowed us to gain a better understanding of how the local economy functioned. It was also a useful tool for pressuring local officials to respond to the complaints of business leaders. Eventually, it became a monthly event, with members of the provincial council and parliament attending, and it gained the support of the Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce, which offered advice and financial assistance. Engaging with the local community, identifying community needs, and facilitating the creation of institutions to represent local interests are the kinds of work that can often be best done by a DOS civilian. Though not often viewed as the type of activity considered integral to a successful counterinsurgency strategy (bolstering indigenous security forces and the local government being the usual means), the creation of a viable civil society that can improve living conditions and government responsiveness is a useful supplement to kinetic operations.

## Improving Governance

Because local leaders are sometimes more willing to speak with a civilian than a member of the U.S. military, I was often able to gain a better understanding of tribal disputes, personal animosities, and local government functions than my military colleagues. This enabled me to help the military increase its situational awareness; to keep coalition forces from being dragged into tribal or personal disputes; and to assist in identifying insurgents in the general population. Such information was especially useful to Uruzgan's PRT during the fall 2005 provincial council and parliamentary elections. By talking with local officials, I determined who had

relatives in government; what the tribal affiliations and home districts of all provincial council and parliamentary candidates were, as well as some of their personal histories; whether they supported the governor or the police chief (the two major political figures of the province); and whether they had been members of the Taliban or the Communist Party in the 1970s to early 1990s. Consequently, I was able to give the SF a political overview of the province, one that helped security elements ensure that rival candidates didn't attack one another and that kept us from being drawn into factional disputes. This information was also useful in assessing whether the candidates were broadly representative of the community and what capacity they might have at good governance. After September's election, I was able to use this information to work with the newly elected officials to improve local governance.

I also conducted a formal assessment of the provincial government's directorates (which are the local government agencies for the host government's central ministries). I interviewed each of the directors about his personnel, resources, and policies while evaluating his individual abilities to lead. Because of these assessments, we were better able to determine whether good governance was taking place and better able to direct the development spending priorities of the PRT, the U.S. Army's civil affairs team, and USAID. By working with local officials and integrating them into our civil affairs missions, the PRT improved the officials' ability to govern and their directorates' capacity to function while better focusing the PRT's reconstruction and development projects. The PRT worked with these officials to develop their long-range planning, help them prioritize their projects, and facilitate their connections to the ministries of the central government. Eventually, these assessments enabled me to make pragmatic recommendations to the embassy, and thus to the government of Afghanistan, about which officials should be removed for incompetence or corruption and how to better direct the spending of limited development resources to improve local governance. As my experience illustrates, these formal assessments had the collective effect of getting the local government to work more effectively, thereby making it a viable institution for the community. A DOS employee is uniquely suited to enable this crucial complement to kinetic operations.



## The Way Ahead

As David Galula pointed out, in a counterinsurgency, units that take part in large-scale military operations will have to perform a myriad of nonmilitary tasks to win the support of the population. When there is a shortage of civilian political and administrative personnel, “making a thorough census, enforcing new regulations on movements of persons and goods, informing the population, conducting person-to-person propaganda, gathering intelligence on the insurgent’s political agents, implementing the various economic and social reforms, etc.—all these will become their primary activity. . . . Thus, a mimeograph machine may turn out to be more useful than a machine gun, a soldier trained as a pediatrician more important than a mortar expert, cement more wanted than barbed wire, clerks more in demand than riflemen.”<sup>6</sup> If we have sufficient DOS personnel—experts in political and administrative matters—to perform such tasks, soldiers would be free to perform essential military functions.

***...a mimeograph machine may turn out to be more useful than a machine gun, a soldier trained as a pediatrician more useful than a mortar expert, cement more wanted than barbed wire...***

from Galula

Identifying, training, and staffing military units with DOS personnel is a significant challenge—but not an impossible one. Like much of the U.S. Army before transformation, the DOS is organized to operate in a world of nation-states. We must make a second, complementary, effort to put diplomats in the field to help combat a global insurgency that does not recognize national borders. The ongoing difficulty of staffing PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq with POLADs underscores the problems the foreign service faces in staffing a worldwide counterinsurgency effort.

Placing DOS personnel on PRTs is a first step toward integrating a diplomatic approach into counterinsurgency efforts. The next step should be placing DOS personnel with as many deployed military units in post-conflict *and* conflict situations as possible, so

that their diplomatic training might benefit the overall effort. Although I was ostensibly charged with working for the PRT of Uruzgan Province, I also had the good fortune of being collocated with the command element of an SF unit at the forward operating base. My advice and the relationships I had developed with local leaders helped SF leaders understand many provincial issues, including tribal, factional, and personal relationships. If the DOS could, as a start, attach one of its employees to the command element of each globally deployed SF unit, our counterinsurgency effort would improve considerably.

Unfortunately, the foreign service is not well structured to man PRTs with the right kind or required number of personnel; therefore, attaching DOS employees to conventional and SF units in the field will be an even more difficult task for the personnel system.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, I recommend that SOCOM agree, on a trial basis, to create 10 slots for DOS personnel to deploy with SF units throughout the world. (This would be similar to the arrangement that pairs a POLAD with each regional combatant commander). In conjunction with SOCOM, the DOS would identify its personnel and place them in these 10 slots. DOS employees would undergo a stripped-down version of military training to ensure they meet some basic physical requirements, have a degree of weapons proficiency, and acquire a basic knowledge of military operations. Each DOS employee would join an SF team as it prepared for deployment, stay with it during its entire deployment, and upon completion of the tour work at SOCOM as a POLAD. Over time, these personnel would move into leadership positions at SOCOM, in embassies, in the civil service (in such places as the Political-Military Bureau and the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism), and in the foreign service.<sup>8</sup> These kinds of tours would not just be a brief interlude from a normal foreign service career path; rather, they would be part of a dedicated profession in which DOS personnel work with SOCOM and make counterinsurgency work in conflict and post-conflict situations a career.

The United States should create a separate service called the Diplomatic Field Service (DFS) that would largely consist of DOS civil service members supplemented by foreign service personnel on rotation. Foreign service officers outside the DFS would have the opportunity to work in the DFS with the expectation

***The United States should create a separate service called the Diplomatic Field Service (DFS) that would largely consist of DOS civil service members supplemented by foreign service personnel on rotation.***

that most employees of the service would progress in this specific line of work during their careers. If the trial program is successful, it could be expanded into conventional forces, and SOCOM could create more slots for DOS employees. In some respects, the DOS has already recognized the need for an expanded civilian component in post-conflict situations similar in mission to that explained above. The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) already envisions a version, similar to the ideas presented earlier, of a deployable civilian corps to “guide post-conflict efforts.” My proposal is slightly different in the following ways, not only from what S/CRS would like, but from what we usually expect of our POLADs. First, it envisions DOS personnel actually working in conflict situations, not just post-conflict situations, and serving solely with military units as opposed to being members of a robust interagency PRT or civilian corps.<sup>9</sup> Second, instead of functioning as a reserve component that would be called upon when needed, the DFS would work in the field of counterinsurgency full time, with its officers undertaking a clearly defined career path. And finally, instead of being solely a reporting officer, a DFS POLAD would be actively engaged in the local political scene, facilitating and coordinating programs and policies that would further the goals of the U.S. Government and the host nation.

## **Conclusion**

Counterinsurgency efforts will continue to be a major component of national security planning,

with the DOS having a unique and crucial role to play in these efforts. PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq have already demonstrated that a DOS employee can add immense value to stability operations by facilitating reconstruction, improving governance, and increasing security. By working to build local government institutions, improve public administration and governance, and provide political leadership and advice, DOS personnel can add enormous value to counterinsurgency efforts in conflict situations as well. Attaching DOS personnel to PRTs is the first step to incorporating diplomatic specialists into post-conflict situations. Assigning DOS personnel to combat units and letting them serve with U.S. military forces as they conduct military operations is the logical extension of this concept. This type of tactical and operational diplomacy is vital to winning the counterinsurgency fight, particularly because most of the elements of a successful counterinsurgency strategy are non-kinetic. Policy makers should recognize the value of this new approach and take appropriate steps to make the DOS a more central player in our efforts to defeat global terrorism. **MR**

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## **NOTES**

1. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964; reprint, 2006), 4-5.

2. Bay Fang, “A ‘Reluctant Warrior’ in Iraq,” *U.S. News & World Report*, 9 January 2006, 18.

3. Paul De La Garza, “Special Ops’ Expanding Role,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 24 September 2005.

4. *Ibid.*

5. On 11 January 2007, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the number of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Iraq would increase from 10 to at least 18 in the coming year.

6. Galula, 66.

7. PRTs are just one aspect of the civilian-military environment that will necessitate transformation of the Department of State (DOS). The DOS is considering ways to help the entire Foreign and Civil Service become a more flexible, expeditionary entity.

8. DOS employees should also have a voice at the senior, strategic level at the Department of Defense and SOCOM to ensure that military operations are planned with sufficient knowledge of the broader political environment in the region and so that special and conventional forces can coordinate and leverage civilian tools of government as far as possible.

9. The Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization envisions advance civilian teams, or ACTs, embedding with the military at division or brigade level to begin reconstruction and stabilization activities as soon as possible. They could remain attached to the military unit or break off when conditions call for or allow a decentralized presence.



# EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

## *Task Force Phantom in the Iraq War*

**Lieutenant Colonel  
Robert P. Whalen Jr.,  
U.S. Army**

*Sometimes Army doctrine actually works when given the chance.*

**I**T IS NO SMALL IRONY that a military intelligence (MI) brigade came to the above conclusion about infantry operations during more than 20 months of combat in 2003 and 2005. With Iraq as the laboratory and an XVIII Airborne Corps infantry long-range surveillance (LRS) company as the test animal, the Army has now produced a substantial body of evidence to show that cold war LRS doctrine is remarkably pertinent to 21st-century counterinsurgency warfare. This is a development that should not pass unnoticed by the Army's infantry and intelligence communities, and especially by the architects of the new battlefield surveillance brigade, which is designed to inherit much of the Army's responsibility for ground surveillance in combat over the next five years.

### **The Kindness of Strangers**

Company F, 51st Infantry, returned to Iraq in late 2004 for its second tour of duty in two years. The Fort Bragg-based infantry unit—assigned, despite its provenance, to XVIII Airborne Corps' 525th MI Brigade—found itself once again in the country's northern provinces, where it had spent most of 2003. But this was the only similarity: nothing else about the return engagement was the same.

Like other corps-level LRS units, Fox Company was designed to be bigger, more mobile, and capable of operating over larger areas than the typical infantry rifle company. The Army had invented the LRS concept in the 1980s at the height of NATO's standoff with the Warsaw Pact in Europe. According to both infantry and MI doctrine, a corps-level LRS company was designed to send 18 six-man teams up to 150 kilometers behind enemy lines to observe operational- and strategic-level objectives, then guide fires on those targets. (At division level, an LRS detachment of six teams had a similar mission on a narrower, less distant strip of enemy terrain.)

To accomplish this demanding mission—almost the stuff of Hollywood thrillers—the Army had richly endowed its corps LRS companies with NCO and officer leaders trained at the Ranger, Pathfinder, and Military Free Fall courses; long-range, high-speed communications equipment and a platoon of signal troops to operate them; dozens of light vehicles and trucks; and state-of-the-art optics, individual weapons, and laser target designators. Despite this embarrassment of riches, many LRS companies struggled in the 1980s and 1990s to play the role the Army had written for them, but failed for reasons that remained depressingly consistent: they had neither the staff nor the influence to coordinate all of their support requirements.

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PHOTO: Companies E and F, 51st Infantry (Long Range Surveillance), at the handover of responsibility for Multi-National Command-Iraq's Task Force Phantom, 20 October 2005, at Al Asad airbase, Anbar province, Iraq. (USMC photo)

***[LRS units were] designed to be bigger, more mobile, and capable of operating over larger areas than the typical infantry rifle company.***

Like Tennessee Williams's heroine Blanche DuBois, LRS units "have always depended on the kindness of strangers." To perform a European-style surveillance mission deep in the enemy heartland, for example, the LRS company had to look far beyond its own ranks for essential support. It required Army aviators or Air Force pilots willing to fly into a hornet's nest of enemy air defenses to drop paratroopers over denied territory; logisticians of the corps support command to figure out how to resupply the teams under the same unpromising conditions; personnel recovery experts to draw up a plan to rescue LRS troops in the event of compromise; and corps frequency managers to dedicate channels for that one company, channels that were in short supply and tightly rationed. Moreover, G2 analysts, accustomed to pondering transnational battlefields, had to switch gears to produce detailed intelligence folders on narrowly defined point targets. Meanwhile, the chief of staff, absorbed with a myriad of other concerns, had to focus his staff on tying together the many loose ends of LRS support.

Not surprisingly, many staff officers preferred to wash their hands of this burden entirely. Following an impressive debut in March 2003, when three surveillance teams moved over 400 kilometers into Iraq to support the advance of 3d Infantry Division, V Corps assigned its organic LRS unit, E Company, 51st Infantry, a series of routine tasks that required little coordination by its headquarters. Even within its own leadership chain, the LRS company was largely neglected by its parent command, 205th Military Intelligence Brigade. That summer the brigade's leadership was distracted by the task of supervising the conventional intelligence operations of eight subordinate battalions—activities that included the creation of a theater-level interrogation center at Abu Ghraib prison. In the war's first months, the 205th showed little interest in enabling its lone

infantry unit to perform its intended combat role. This squandered the LRS company's unique capabilities. After March 2003, Echo Company's LRS teams functioned as little more than spare infantry in Iraq. They escorted convoys, conducted presence patrols, manned guard towers, prowled highways for homemade bombs and, for a brief period, shot feral dogs on U.S. bases. It seemed at times that the teams did almost everything *except* LRS operations.

A second LRS unit, attached to V Corps a few weeks before the invasion, fared somewhat differently. Initially, V Corps sliced Fox Company, 51st Infantry—the XVIII Airborne Corps LRS unit—into groups of free-floating teams, stripped of their organic company leadership and earmarked to individual divisions. In May, the newly-created Combined Joint Task Force 7 brought the unit back together and attached it to the 101st Airborne Division, which further subordinated the corps-level LRS unit to an infantry battalion operating in Mosul. Initially, the LRS company performed important but routine missions—delivering propane gas and guarding banks in the capital of Ninevah province.

Two months later the division commander, Major General David Petraeus, assigned Fox Company a new mission that exploited its special talents for the first time. Dispatched to the northern Kurdish occupied provinces, the unit surveyed Iraq's frontiers with Turkey and Iran and trained Peshmerga militiamen to serve as members of Iraq's new federal border police. Under the deft supervision of the division's military intelligence battalion, Fox Company teams operated with ease in remote, mountainous terrain that would have defeated the vehicles, line-of-sight radios, and back muscles of conventional infantry units. The company's operations and intelligence section came into its own, planning missions and organizing logistic support to LRS teams widely scattered across the Zagros Mountains.

***Fox Company teams operated with ease in remote, mountainous terrain that would have defeated the vehicles, line-of-sight radios, and back muscles of conventional infantry units.***



Fox Company also provided intelligence reports from border areas where few Americans had ventured since the aftermath of the Gulf War. Washington paid special attention to the unit's eyewitness reports on the shadowy Kurdish PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) guerrilla movement, a source of growing friction between the United States and its NATO ally across the Iraqi border, Turkey. Within weeks, Petraeus's economy-of-force mission turned into a showcase for LRS strengths as U.S. military operations in Iraq began to journey down new and unforeseen paths.

## LRS, Version 2.0

Upon their return to Fort Bragg, and armed with experiences in Kurdistan and a letter of support from Petraeus, Fox Company and its parent organization, 519th MI Battalion, spent nine months in 2004 acquiring equipment and training to prepare for genuine LRS operations in Iraq. Company and battalion leaders shuttled to the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters to explain LRS capabilities and to plead for missions that would exploit the unit's unique skills.

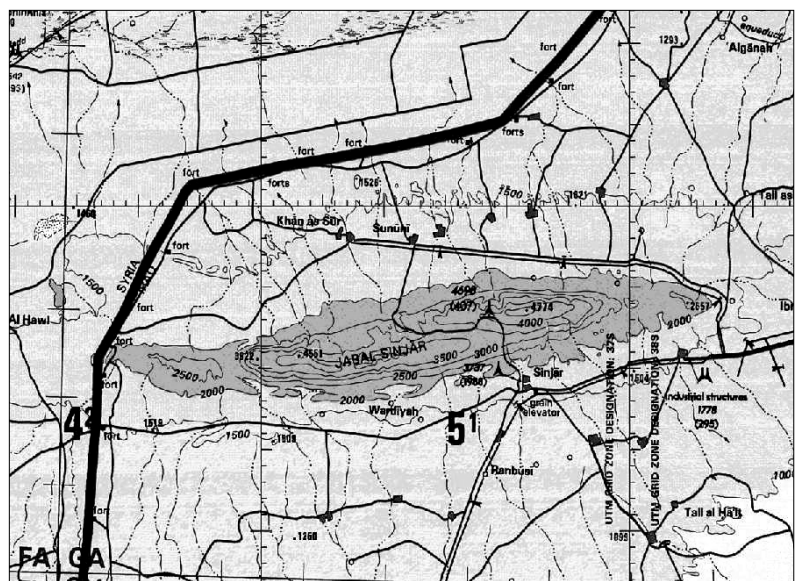
These efforts came at a time when Iraq's growing insurgency was creating a demand for extended surveillance of the country's western borders. By February 2005, when the XVIII Airborne Corps staff took over leadership of Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I), coalition forces faced a growing campaign of intimidation from suicide bombers. Insurgents engineered a flow of money, men, and equipment from outside the country to create mayhem in Iraq's biggest cities. They took advantage of the long, undefended frontier with Syria to supply Iraqi fighters with the raw materials for homemade bombs and other weapons of terror. In its first two months of independent operations along the border, Fox Company sent irrefutable evidence to Baghdad of the insurgents' undocumented transit in both directions, heedless of Iraqi border police.

MNC-I resolved to gain control of Iraq's western frontier to stop this deadly flow. The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) was reassigned from the Baghdad region to a base outside Tal Afar, 40 miles west of Mosul, where it embarked on a counterinsurgency campaign later recognized

as a model of its kind. To support the regiment's efforts, MNC-I subjected its intelligence forces in the north to an extreme makeover. At the heart of this reorganization was a new task force with Fox Company, once again in Iraq, as its anchor.

Created in April 2005, Task Force Phantom represented a rare case of the doctrinal use of an LRS company in combat. Chartered to identify and stop insurgent border crossers, Phantom's 15 LRS teams were joined by a powerful collection of additional intelligence tools taken from MNC-I's supply locker, including—

- Dozens of Omnisensors, remotely monitored automatic sentries that, when approached by vehicles or people, took digital pictures and beamed them to a satellite. Within minutes the pictures were on a secure Internet site that troops in the desert could view.
- An AirScan system consisting of a Cessna 337 with a video package similar to that found on Predator unmanned aerial vehicles. AirScan sent imagery in real time to LRS teams on the ground and to their controllers in Mosul.
- Signals intelligence from a corps eavesdropping system whose Arabic-speaking operator enjoyed immediate access to national-level agencies.
- A tactical human intelligence team of experienced, Arabic-speaking U.S. counterintelligence agents who accompanied LRS troops on their patrols.
- A Trojan Spirit communications ensemble that afforded secure connections to commanders in



Beginning in January 2005, Task Force Phantom placed teams along the Iraq-Syria frontier west of Sinjar Mountain.

Mosul and Baghdad, plus intelligence data bases at every level.

- Additional analysts, especially in the signals and imagery disciplines, who enabled Task Force Phantom to assess and report its own intelligence, create target folders, and control all steps of the intelligence cycle.

- A U.S. Air Force joint tactical air controller qualified to call for fire support from F-16 fighters and other aircraft. This was an investment in the task force's ability to defend itself and a sign that Task Force Phantom was expected to act on its intelligence and not merely report it.

Although the task force was a corps-level entity, MNC-I placed Phantom under the day-to-day tactical control of a subordinate two-star command, Multi-National Brigade-Northwest, based in Mosul.

Because Task Force Phantom was an intelligence asset, Fox Company's parent MI battalion installed its executive officer, an MI major, as the full-time task force commander and moved him to Mosul. This step placed the responsibility for integrating the task force's diverse assets in the hands of an experienced tactical intelligence officer and freed the Fox Company commander, Captain Thomas M. Hough, to concentrate on leading his infantry troops. The task force commander also ensured that his 20-member operations and intelligence section worked together to organize much of its own support, significantly reducing the burden on its supported headquarters, a burden that had led to the previous misuse of LRS teams in Iraq.

The employment of Task Force Phantom represented both an experiment in traditional LRS doctrine and a test of tactical intelligence doctrine. MNC-I utilized Fox Company *in toto*—as an intelligence sensor, a corps-controlled asset, and a tool against an enemy threat that transcended U.S. unit boundaries. But the task force also reflected the conviction of Lieutenant General John R. Vines, MNC-I's commander for most of 2005, that sensors must be massed and focused to obtain the best results, rather than piecemealed out to divisions and brigade combat teams in a futile search for equity.

**Intelligence lines of effort.** Focused on the insurgents' "rat lines" into Iraq, Task Force Phantom's operations followed a four-phase cycle that made the most of MNC-I's commitment of troops and systems.

The first three phases, intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB), situational development, and target development, typically resulted in a deliberate offensive operation conducted by Phantom's maneuver partner in northwest Iraq. As a result of this operation, Phantom teams conducted the fourth phase, battle damage assessment.

Intelligence preparation of the battlespace occurred in Mosul, where Task Force Phantom analysts plotted signals and human intelligence reports from a variety of sources to identify sectors of Iraq's western frontier for scrutiny.

Situational development consisted of locating insurgents and their sympathizers and determining their vulnerabilities and intentions. Task Force Phantom placed Omnisensors along the border to



This truck was one of many vehicles LRS teams observed carrying military-aged males across the Syria-Iraq frontier in early 2005.



The teams observed regular meetings of AIF facilitators at one illicit border-crossing point near the frontier town of Sinjar, described by the LRS company commander as a "taxi stand" for insurgents. At this crossing site, the facilitators made cell-phone calls and arranged for the transit of men and equipment into Iraq.



F/51 Inf (LRS)

**Long-range surveillance teams of Company F, 51st Infantry, on patrol near the Syrian border, spring 2005.**

detect movement in areas not easily accessed, while LRS teams, sometimes accompanied by Arabic-speaking foreign area officers and other regional experts, drove from village to village in broad daylight to ask local people about strangers in their area. In addition, AirScan flew along Syria's frontier with Iraq looking for breaks in the earthworks, and signals intelligence sensors monitored activity by insurgents and smugglers. In Mosul, analysts sifted through reports from these and other sources, drew connections between enemy personalities and activities, and selected a few for special attention.

Target development required LRS teams to locate suspected insurgent camps and to hunt down and observe suspicious individuals or groups to determine their intentions. LRS teams in their armored HMMWVs trundled hundreds of kilometers through the desert at night to reach surveillance sites identified during previous phases of the intelligence cycle. Electronic eavesdropping systems, working among the Silk Road trails used by smugglers for centuries, searched for clues to distinguish border crossers carrying cigarettes from those bearing a more sinister cargo. In some cases, LRS scouts quietly established "hides" a few hundred meters from their targets and watched them across a flat desert floor for several days and nights in the broiling summer. Depending on the situation, Task Force Phantom could pass targets either to maneuver units like 3d ACR or to the U.S. Air Force for action.

In early June, Phantom's maneuver partner in northwest Iraq, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, mounted an offensive operation codenamed Operation Odin. Task Force Phantom targeted twelve different residents of local villages whom its analysts had linked to cross-border trafficking of bomb-making materials. The ACR commander, Colonel H.R. McMaster, marshaled a battalion task force to pick up members of the insurgent cell. McMaster selected positive identification of eight of the twelve target personalities by Task Force Phantom as the trigger to initiate simultaneous nighttime raids on the villages. Drawing together eyewitness reports from surveillance teams, as well as real-time intelligence from national sources, Phantom delivered the intelligence that enabled McMaster's task force to execute rapid precision raids on a handful of houses. In some cases, on-scene LRS teams illuminated selected buildings with laser target designators, guiding McMaster's forces directly to targets and helping them to avoid a broad-brush clearing operation likely to anger villagers throughout the region.

Precision offensive operations like Odin would frequently overturn the chessboard of local perpetrators, enablers and their secret sharers, so intelligence gathering continued as the maneuver unit returned to its base. Task Force Phantom's assets—AirScan, LRS scouts, tactical human intelligence teams, and signals intelligence systems—swept the target area to assess immediate battle damage as well as to look for signs



of new patterns of activity among local target personalities. Information gathered in this phase sometimes produced the seed corn for future operations.

## **In Orbe Terrum Non Visi**

Task Force Phantom's teams typically worked in remote areas far from Iraq's big cities for five to seven days at a time. Their armored HMMWVs ventured far beyond the logistic support radius of other U.S. units based in Mosul or even Tal Afar. No Stryker brigade or other modularized unit could dwell along Iraq's borders for long, but Task Force Phantom's teams made these areas their home.

The extended distances to border surveillance areas required LRS teams to take extraordinary measures to protect themselves. With helicopter reinforcements frequently over an hour away, the LRS company had to raise ground quick-reaction forces from its own ranks. In addition, evacuation to the nearest field hospital by Black Hawk helicopter typically took at least 90 minutes, so it was vitally important that virtually every team member be a certified combat lifesaver or emergency medical technician.

To reduce the risk, LRS teams placed a proposed surveillance site under observation for a night and a day before occupying the "hide" to watch a target. Careful advance study of prospective surveillance areas by analysts in Mosul also helped the task force reduce the danger of sudden compromise, and additional insurance took the form of the JTAC seconded to Phantom, who could summon devastating fires from coalition fighter aircraft. Nonetheless, the requirement for self-protection tended to limit the number of teams that could perform surveillance at any given time to about five—a single LRS platoon.

Through the efforts of these teams, MNC-I gained specific, documentary evidence of substantial movements of men and materiel from Syria to Iraq, movements that were the subject of bitter controversy between Damascus and Washington in 2004 and 2005. Syria strengthened its own border control

measures to restrict the flow, and Task Force Phantom was positioned to verify these changes as well.

Working in tandem with 3d ACR, Task Force Phantom conducted a series of platoon operations in Iraq's western desert during the spring and summer of 2005. Each time teams returned from the frontier, the task force handed its maneuver partners target packets, which they used to clear insurgents and their facilitators from border areas. As summer cycled into autumn, MNC-I funneled additional battalions into the Euphrates River valley, and Phantom shifted its surveillance activities steadily southward. When the task force reached the river, MNC-I transferred tactical control of the force to the Marines of Multi-National Division–West, who oversaw the vast western province of Anbar. Because the corps had designed Phantom to be portable, the task force quickly moved its troops and ground equipment from Mosul to Al Asad Air Base with little interruption in surveillance. (The task force has since moved to another region of Iraq.)

Task Force Phantom's reporting drew widespread praise from conventional and special operations commanders throughout northern Iraq. By the time Fox Company rotated out of the theater in November, a new LRS company, E/51st Infantry, had replaced it as the anchor of the corps task force. This handover of authority was the clearest sign yet that the LRS organization and doctrine underpinning Phantom were meeting an urgent, enduring need in MNC-I.

## **New Lessons from Old Doctrine**

As the Army ponders the future of 21st-century human intelligence collection, Task Force Phantom's experiences in Iraq in 2005 point to the following lessons:

- The Army's original LRS doctrine works. Senior commanders get the best results from an LRS company when they employ the unit intact with its own command and control mechanisms, when it is guided at the two- or three-star level, and

***Through the efforts of [LRS] teams, MNC-I gained specific, documentary evidence of substantial movements of men and materiel from Syria to Iraq...***



when it is directed against enemy targets of national significance.

- An LRS company is an intelligence-gathering unit. Using it in any other role denies the Army an appropriate return on its investment.

- Adding a handful of analysts and planners to the LRS company headquarters eliminates most of the support burden on the three-star headquarters staff and strengthens the continuity and coherence of surveillance operations to boot.

- The LRS company plays a vital strategic and operational intelligence-collection role not easily duplicated elsewhere in the Army. Neither conventional units, because of the limitations of their equipment, nor special operations forces, for which demand everywhere outstrips supply, can perform these roles.

- Massing intelligence sensors gets results; piecemealing the assets squanders them.

- LRS companies have compiled a record of proven achievements in Iraq, which makes them a natural anchor of the Army's new battlefield surveillance brigades, hybrid formations of combat arms and intelligence troops that will replace the corps MI brigades over the next five years.

Task Force Phantom's achievements in Iraq suggest that perhaps one more item should be added to the small list of 1980s artifacts that have acquired new resonance in the 21st century. Just as the spotlight of history is circling back to Steve Jobs, Live Aid, and gas-efficient automobiles, world events have made the Army's long-range surveillance doctrine suddenly interesting and relevant again. Like those 1980s icons, LRS units have commanded attention for breaking molds and defying expectations. But best of all—and unlike Duran Duran—the doctrine has the potential to save a life or two. **MR**

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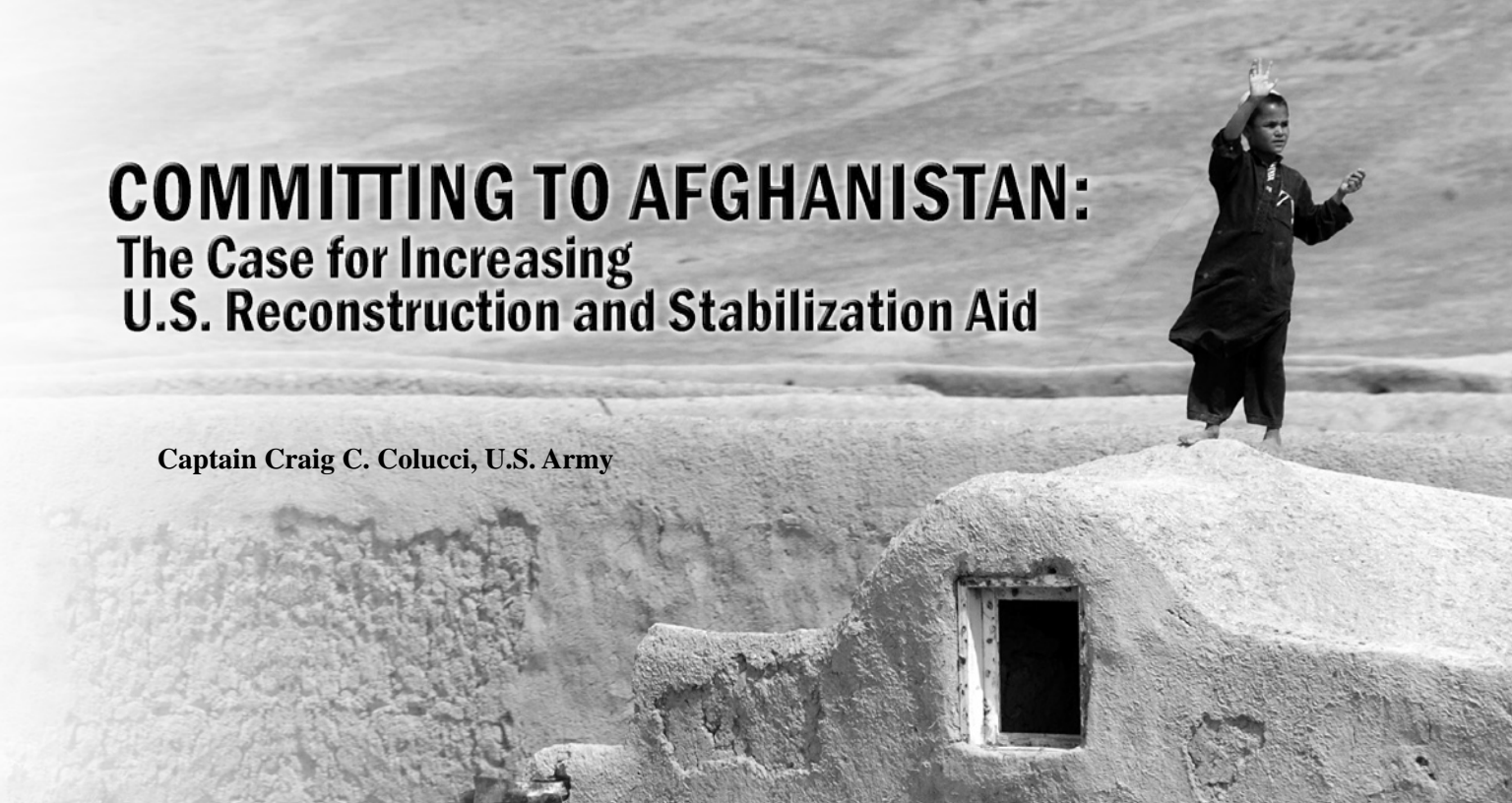
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# COMMITTING TO AFGHANISTAN: The Case for Increasing U.S. Reconstruction and Stabilization Aid

Captain Craig C. Colucci, U.S. Army



THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFGHANISTAN as a successful nation-state is at grave risk, and its failure could have a resounding strategic and economic impact on the United States and, indeed, the entire world. This summer will be a critical time, as increasing instability threatens to unravel the initial successes achieved after the U.S. invasion in 2001.

Four major, interconnected problems threaten the stability of the country: a strong resurgence of the Taliban, a substantial increase in violence, an alarming growth in opium production, and a demoralized population with little faith that their quality of life will improve and serious misgivings about the conduct of the Afghan Government and NATO forces.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the United States has decreased its contributions for reconstruction and stabilization (R&S) aid.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of the War on Terrorism, R&S funding for Afghanistan has been minimal in relation to overall war costs and meager compared to those of past U.S. nation-building efforts. This “bare bones” spending policy is one of the factors threatening the stability of Afghanistan. Should the Afghan state fail or the government weaken, this shortsighted approach will have caused economic woes for the United States.

We should not lose hope, however, for there has been a renewed focus on Afghanistan by President Bush’s administration. In January, President Bush announced he is seeking \$10.6 billion in aid to Afghanistan over the next two years. This funding allocation would designate \$8.6 billion for training and equipping Afghan forces and \$2 billion for reconstruction.<sup>3</sup> However, do not break out the “mission accomplished” signs yet, because two problems exist with this funding. First, Afghanistan needs the aid right now—not later—to fight against another spring and summer Taliban offensive. Second, \$2 billion is not nearly enough to address Afghanistan’s reconstruction requirements. The United States should increase R&S funding for Afghanistan immedi-

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PHOTO: An Afghan boy waves as a U.S. convoy passes by in Panjuay, Afghanistan, 2004. Is he still waving in 2007? (courtesy of the author)

ately to combat the increasing number of serious challenges that threaten its stability and to prevent future economic problems for America.

## Increasing Instability

The Taliban is making a violent resurgence throughout Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup> Last October, Afghan President Hamid Karzai attributed this resurgence to the “lack of a proper police force, lack of a proper military force, and because of the general inability of the country, weakened by years of destruction, to provide that kind of protection to the public.”<sup>5</sup> In September 2006, two *Newsweek* correspondents met with a Taliban leader residing just a two-hour drive south of the capital, Kabul. They reported, “Ridge by ridge and valley by valley, the religious zealots [Taliban] who harbored Osama bin-Laden before 9/11—and who suffered devastating losses in the U.S. invasion that began five years ago—are surging back into the country’s center.”<sup>6</sup> Recently, Taliban leaders said that they have 10,000 fighters and suicide bombers ready to fight.<sup>7</sup>

Violence is accompanying the resurgence of the Taliban. Civilian and military casualties are mounting at alarming levels.<sup>8</sup> U.S. combat-related casualties in and around Afghanistan have doubled since February 2005 (see figure 1).<sup>9</sup> The increasing use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers prompted the vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to visit Afghanistan in September 2006 to address the situation.<sup>10</sup> The violence has greatly hindered Afghanistan’s reconstruction. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which leads reconstruction in Afghanistan, notes, “Security remains the greatest obstacle to development in Afghanistan.”<sup>11</sup>

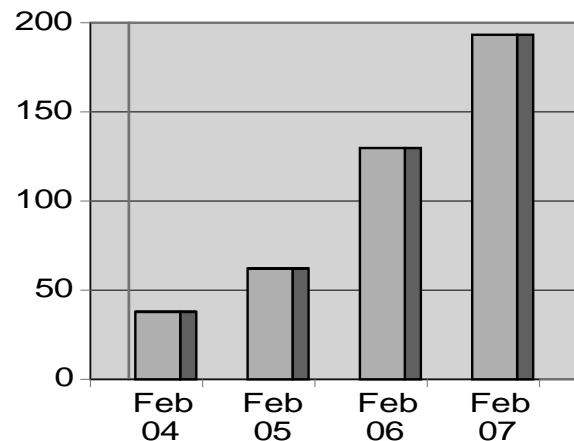
The increasing drug cultivation adds to the problems. President Karzai said that the country needs to destroy opium, or opium will destroy Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> In that case, the 49 percent annual increase in opium cultivation (6,100 metric tons) in 2006 might be an early sign of impending disaster.<sup>13</sup> The drug trade is equivalent to more than 50 percent of the country’s gross domestic product and accounts for 90 percent of the world’s supply of opium, with an estimated export value of \$2.7 billion in 2005.<sup>14</sup> Ayesha Khan, an expert on Afghanistan and associate fellow at the London-based Royal Institute of International Affairs, explains, “Poppy cultivation



is also a major problem, as is the power of regional warlords which is sustained by the opium economy, and which undermines Karzai’s writ across the country. The warlords and drug economy have a profoundly destabilizing effect.”<sup>15</sup>

The most damaging trend has been the population’s growing discontent with and lack of confidence in the government and in U. S. and NATO forces. The number of civilian casualties from violence has been so great that NATO’s top commander, U.S. General James L. Jones, apologized

**49 percent increase in U.S. combat-related deaths in Afghanistan from February 2006 to February 2007 —205 percent since February 2005.**



Source: U.S. DoD Casualty Reports

**Figure 1. Cumulative totals of U.S. military killed in action in and around Afghanistan, February 2004 to February 2007.**





**Soldiers provide medical aid to a child in Maywand, Afghanistan, 2004.**

for the deaths caused by fighting between NATO and the Taliban.<sup>16</sup> In October 2006, NATO forces bombed a village that housed Taliban forces in southern Afghanistan, killing anywhere from 12 to 85 civilians, depending on the source. In response to the bombing, a local Afghan leader was quoted as saying, “At the moment there is very little public support for NATO, but it is not the end of the world. If NATO wants cooperation from people they should change their strategy and stop fighting and build roads and schools.”<sup>17</sup>

Besides violence, Afghans suffer from inadequate public services, poor transport infrastructure, limited access to health care, and widespread human rights abuses.<sup>18</sup> The United Nations World Food Program claims that almost half the population of Afghanistan suffers from malnutrition.<sup>19</sup> According to the World Bank, “only 13 percent of Afghans have access to safe water, 12 percent to adequate sanitation, and just 6 percent to electricity.”<sup>20</sup> Summing up the mood of the Afghan population, Jabar Shigari, a member of the Afghan Parliament from Ghazni, noted, “We have patiently waited five years for change, for an end to official corruption and abuse of power and for economic development. But we’ve received nothing.”<sup>21</sup>

## Decreasing R&S Commitment

U.S. R&S spending in Afghanistan falls short of the commitment necessary to achieve stability and develop the country. Although the United States remains the greatest contributor to Afghanistan, its R&S funding levels are insignificant compared to

the costs of the overall War on Terrorism and past nation-building endeavors.

The Congressional Research Service divides U.S. R&S aid into four categories and by percentage of total budget allocated: reconstruction (41 percent), foreign aid programs (37 percent), training security forces (17 percent), and new embassies (5 percent).<sup>22</sup> The U.S. Department of State and USAID manage the reconstruction, new embassies, and foreign aid program categories, while the Department of Defense (DOD) controls funding for training security forces and a small-scale (\$400 million) reconstruction fund called the Commanders’ Emergency Response Program, a discretionary fund used by military leaders to help the population.<sup>23</sup>

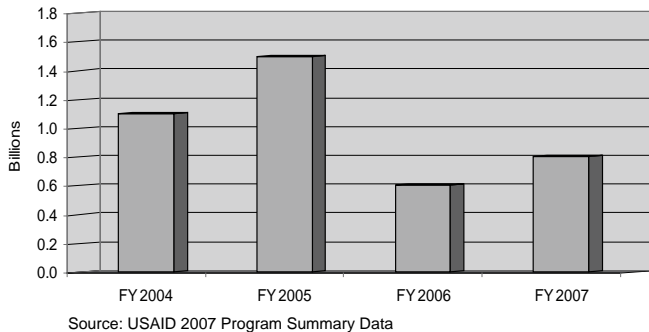
Both DOD and USAID have an important role in stabilizing Afghanistan—USAID through reconstruction, which can reduce the problems that plague Afghanistan’s infrastructure, economic development, and health and education systems, and DOD by training security forces, which will strengthen the Afghan police and military. President Bush’s \$8 billion will be crucial for security assistance, but additional funds for reconstruction must follow.

Despite the need, reconstruction funds for Afghanistan have been declining. Over the last four years, USAID contributed about \$3.5 billion for reconstruction projects in Afghanistan, but from 2005 to 2006, its contributions declined 60 percent, from \$1.5 billion to \$617 million. Although USAID projects an incremental increase in funding for FY 2007, upping the allocation to \$802.8 million, overall spending for the country has declined 29 percent since 2004.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the dollar amount USAID received for reconstruction has fluctuated so much that it has been extremely difficult to program reconstruction projects: in 2005, USAID’s budget proposed \$1 billion for FY 2007, but the agency only received \$802.8 million (see figure 2).<sup>25</sup>

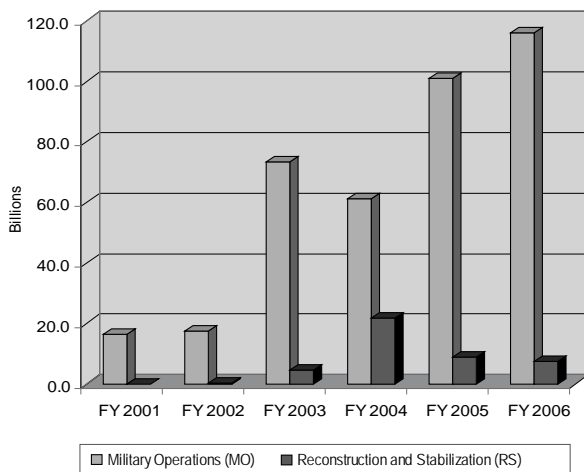
The decline in spending for R&S in Afghanistan is consistent with a decline in R&S funding for the War on Terrorism. In testimony before Congress, the U.S. Comptroller General reported that the difference between military and R&S spending was \$20 billion in 2004, but military spending rose by almost 90 percent in 2006, while R&S spending decreased 64 percent (see figure 3).<sup>26</sup> President



**Overall decreasing trend: 60 percent decrease in reconstruction funding from FY 2005 to 2006 and 29 percent decrease from FY 2004 to 2007**



**Figure 2. USAID reconstruction spending in Afghanistan.**



**Figure 3. Total GWOT spending FY 2001–2006.**

Bush's additional \$10.6 billion for FY 2007 seems like an attempt to close the gap, but a 25 percent increase in military spending, bringing it to \$150 billion for 2007, suggests otherwise.<sup>27</sup>

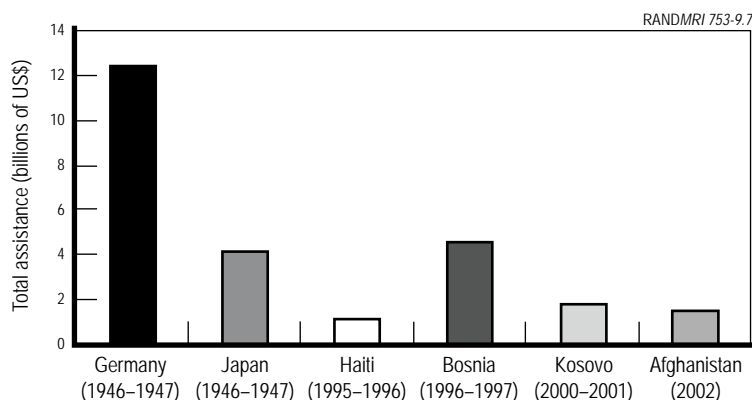
Moreover, Afghanistan R&S aid represents only a tiny portion of the cost of the War on Terrorism. The Congressional Budget Office reports that the United States will have appropriated \$26 billion for Afghanistan from 2001 to 2008 for indigenous security forces, diplomatic operations, and foreign aid. Although this is a huge sum of money, \$26 billion is a mere 3.5 percent of the \$746 billion cost of the War on Terrorism during this period and not even a true reflection of how lean reconstruction spending really is.<sup>28</sup> The \$802.8 million budgeted by USAID for 2007 reconstruction is one-half of one percent of the \$150 billion cost of the War on Terrorism.

## The Vital Importance of R&S Funding in Afghanistan

In October 2006, NATO's General Jones said efforts to rebuild Afghanistan and establish the rule of law posed the biggest challenge. He stated, "I'm confident that we can take on any military challenge that there is and be successful, but the real challenge in Afghanistan is how well the reconstruction mission—the international aid mission—is focused."<sup>29</sup> A commitment to reconstruction is vital to Afghanistan's existence, and increased funding is necessary to complete this task.

Studies have shown that time and resources are necessary for successful nation building. In 2003, the Rand Corporation analyzed U.S. and international military, political, and economic activities in post-conflict situations since World War II to determine principles for success and implications for future U.S. military operations. One of the key lessons learned was that time and resources lead to nation-building success. The study concluded: "What distinguishes Germany, Japan, Bosnia, and Kosovo, on the one hand, from Somalia, Haiti, and Afghanistan, on the other, are not their levels of economic development, Western culture, or national homogeneity. Rather, what distinguishes these two groups are the levels of effort the international community has put into their democratic transformations. Successful nation building, as this study illustrates, needs time and resources. The United States and its allies have put 25 times more money and 50 times more troops per capita into post conflict Kosovo than into post conflict Afghanistan (see figure 4). This higher level of input accounts, at least in part, for the higher level of output in terms of democratic institutions and economic growth."<sup>30</sup>

Although more R&S aid has been spent in Afghanistan since Rand's 2003 study, it has been insufficient. The international community has committed \$15 billion, but the pledges still fall significantly short of the \$24.7 billion the Afghan government estimates it will need through 2010 to rebuild the country, and actual contributions from the international community have been less than half the amount promised.<sup>31</sup> Last September, Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, said, "We need more in terms of



**Figure 4. Total assistance during first two post-conflict years.**

investment in Afghan infrastructure. We need more resources for road building, counternarcotics, good governance, and a justice system.”<sup>32</sup>

U.S. military doctrine clearly explains the dire need for R&S aid in nation building. Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, states, “Most valuable to long-term success in winning the support of the populace are the contributions land forces make by conducting stability operations. Stability operations is an overarching term encompassing various military missions . . . to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief (JP 1-02).” It continues, “Success in stability operations enables the local populace and HN [Host Nation] government agencies to resume or develop the capabilities needed to conduct COIN operations and create conditions that permit U.S. military forces to disengage.”<sup>33</sup>

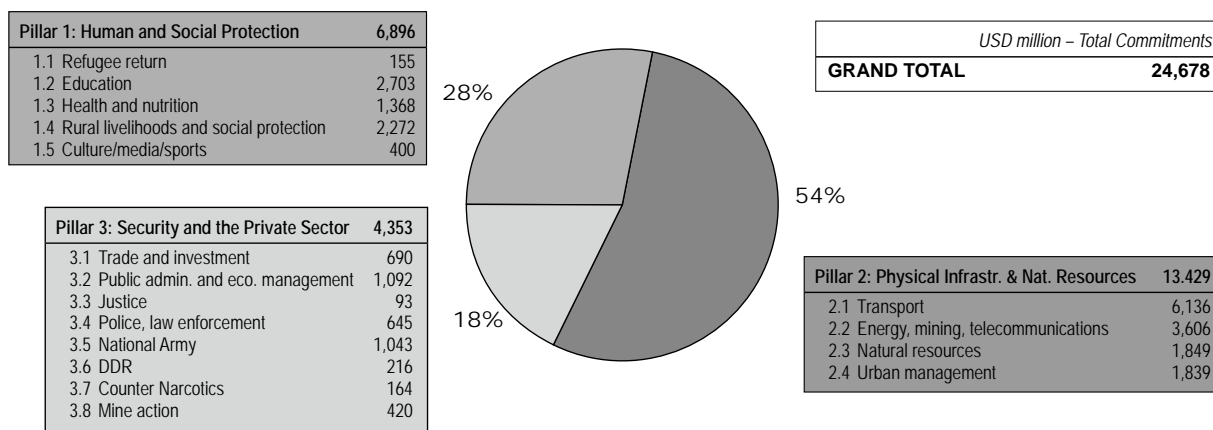
## Increased Funding Needed Immediately

Combating the instability caused by the Taliban, violence, drugs, and demoralization of the population will take more money than forecasted for R&S. In 2004, Afghanistan released its National Development Strategy, which estimated external funds needed for its capital and development budget at \$24.678 billion (see figure 5).<sup>34</sup> Last year an agreement between Afghanistan and the international community identified three broad priorities for the country’s continued development:

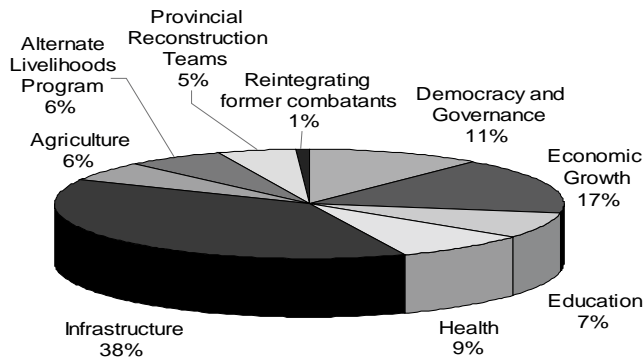
security; governance, the rule of law, and human rights; and economic and social development.<sup>35</sup> These priorities are in line with Afghanistan’s National Development Strategy and coincide with USAID’s more focused priorities for development: agriculture and alternative livelihoods; basic education and health; infrastructure, democracy and governance; and economic growth.<sup>36</sup> The priorities both meet the demand of Afghans and address the destabilization factors and significant human welfare problems. Figure 6 shows what USAID spent addressing these priorities from 2001-2006.<sup>37</sup>

## The Plan

Afghanistan needs another \$12 billion for FY 2008-2010 in addition to President Bush’s \$10.6 billion. Bush’s \$8.6 billion for security forces would be spent at \$4.3 billion per year for the remainder of FY 2007 and 2008 and an additional \$2 billion per year for FYs 2009 and 2010. Thus,



**Figure 5. Capital and development budget from the Afghanistan National Development Strategy.**



**Figure 6. Breakdown of USAID funds (\$3.5 billion) in Afghanistan, 2001–2006.**

the stabilization total would be \$12.6 billion from FY 2007–2010.

For reconstruction, \$1 billion of Bush's \$2 billion commitment would be spent in the remainder of FY 2007. The other billion, plus an additional \$2 billion, would be spent in FY 2008. FY 2009 and 2010 would have \$3 billion each. Thus, the reconstruction total for 2007–2010 would be \$10 billion (see figure 7). Of the \$3 billion per year for reconstruction funding, \$2.5 billion should be used to continue USAID's current spending program, which follows the priorities set by the Afghan Government. The remaining \$500 million should be CERP funds, to be utilized by military commanders on the ground through provincial reconstruction teams and individual task forces.

This two-pronged approach—reconstruction and security forces—addresses infrastructure, economic development, and health issues through USAID, while simultaneously having an immediate and positive impact on Afghan military forces. CERP funds are essential because they encourage the population to support the government and NATO forces. Increased reconstruction would decrease instability, while funding for security forces training

would empower the Afghan police and military to eliminate the Taliban and help bring stability and peace to the country.

Perhaps most important, these funds would become calculable cash flows for Afghanistan, USAID, and NATO. Similar to any business, a reliable cash flow will allow Afghanistan and USAID to plan and institute a more thorough development plan because they will know when funds will be available in the future. In the Afghanistan Compact, signed this past February, international donors (including the United States) committed to "increasingly provide more predictable and multiyear funding commitments or indications of multiyear support to Afghanistan to enable the Government to plan better the implementation of its National Development Strategy and provide untied aid whenever possible."<sup>38</sup>

It is crucial that the United States live up to its obligation and provide sufficient funding so that the Afghan Government can implement its strategy for stability and growth.

## Importance of a Stable Afghanistan

If, as some say, winning is no longer a possibility in Iraq, then a loss in Afghanistan in which the Taliban gains its old training grounds back to stage future terrorist attacks would mean the United States has lost the War on Terrorism.<sup>39</sup> Such a failure would embolden and empower Al-Qaeda, and the staggering costs of attacks similar to that of 11 September 2001, plus the increased security measures to prevent further attacks, would lead to direct costs and indirect effects that influence the U.S. economy.

Before the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Bin-Laden and Al-Qaeda were in the country working closely with Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban. The August 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the October 2000 USS *Cole* bombing, and the 11 September 2001 attacks were all planned in Afghanistan.<sup>40</sup>

Now, once again, the Taliban is operating in some areas of Afghanistan. If Al-Qaeda is not there already, it soon will be. A failed Afghan state or even one with a weak government would allow Al-Qaeda to establish planning, operations, training, and recruiting nodes in the country. Military historian

	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	TOTALS
Reconstruction	1	1 2	3	3	10
Stabilization	4.3	4.3	2	2	12.6

President Bush's proposed	10.6
Recommended increase	12

**Figure 7. Proposed FY 2007–2010 Afghan R&S Budget. (in billions)**

Stephen Tanner claims that it would be dangerous for the United States to abandon Afghanistan. He writes, "Instant global communication with its consequent accessibility to weapons technology can make even the poorest or most remote nation a threat to the world. . . After a half-century of cold war, the United States suffered the greatest foreign attack in its history not from the gigantic armaments of Russia or China, but at the hands of a small group based on Afghan soil."<sup>41</sup>

Besides the loss of life, the economic costs resulting from the 11 September 2001 attacks were astounding. The Institute for the Analysis of Global Security (IAGS) estimates that the property damage and lost production of goods and services was over \$100 billion. Moreover, "including the loss in stock market wealth—the market's own estimate arising from expectations of lower corporate profits and higher discount rates for economic volatility—the price tag approaches \$2 trillion."<sup>42</sup> The \$2 trillion estimate is 166 times greater than the \$12 billion proposed for Afghanistan R&S aid from FY 2007 to FY 2010. According to New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson Jr., the attacks cost up to \$95 billion and caused the loss of 146,000 jobs to the city alone.<sup>43</sup> On the conservative side, the economic cost of one day of a coordinated terrorist attack planned in Afghanistan, \$95 billion, is almost 8 times the proposed R&S amount. Harvard economist Kenneth Rogoff asserts that "another atrocity on the scale of September 11 would wreak havoc on energy prices, stock markets, and consumer confidence, slamming the brakes on today's global economic recovery."<sup>44</sup>

The economic impact of antiterrorism efforts can have a significant negative effect on the American and global economy. The hindered free flow of goods, services, and individuals across international borders can slow economic growth. U.S. immigration restrictions imposed after 9/11 are a case in point, for they prevent the influx of science and engineering knowledge from abroad. Innovation through science and research leads to U.S. economic growth and global competitiveness. When you consider that foreign-born immigrants account for more than one-fifth of America's scientists and engineers, you can understand the impact immigration restrictions may have on the Nation's

growth. In addition, over 43 percent of America's Ph.D.'s are foreign born. First-time international student enrollment in graduate level science and engineering programs dropped by 13 percent from 2001 to 2003 (the latest year statistics were available). This decline may be the result of immigration restrictions.<sup>45</sup> If Rogoff is right that, "the U.S. economy grows in no small part by skimming the cream off of the rest of the world's workforce," the hidden costs of anti-terror efforts are great indeed.<sup>46</sup> Another example of antiterrorism measures slowing growth would be increased scrutiny of goods at American and international ports. As trade and the pace of goods through ports slow, costs will skyrocket and product innovation will be stifled. Rogoff sums up the effects thusly: "Any abatement of the competitive pressures of globalization or any reduction in the free movement of people and ideas would surely undercut growth—not to mention raise prices sharply at your local Wal-Mart."<sup>47</sup>

## The Bottom Line

It is crucial that the United States increase R&S aid in Afghanistan immediately so that Afghanistan does not become a staging ground for terrorist operations. A failed Afghanistan will pose direct risks to U.S. strategic and economic interests. The resurgence of the Taliban, increased violence, the growth of opium production, and, consequently, a population with too little faith in their government and NATO forces, threaten the stability of the nation. The decreasing U.S. R&S commitment to Afghanistan is most likely fueling these factors. Reconstruction funding decreases of 60 percent will not lead to a more stable Afghanistan. Although President Bush has committed \$10.6 billion, it is not enough to accomplish the mission. The United States must commit \$12 billion in additional R&S aid to Afghanistan for 2007 to 2010 so the country and the international community can plan for and work toward stabilization. In the long run, a \$12 billion investment for a stable and democratic state in Central Asia could save America and the world trillions of dollars in losses from terrorist attacks and the measures to prevent such attacks. True Afghanistan development must continue this summer with increased R&S funding. **MR**



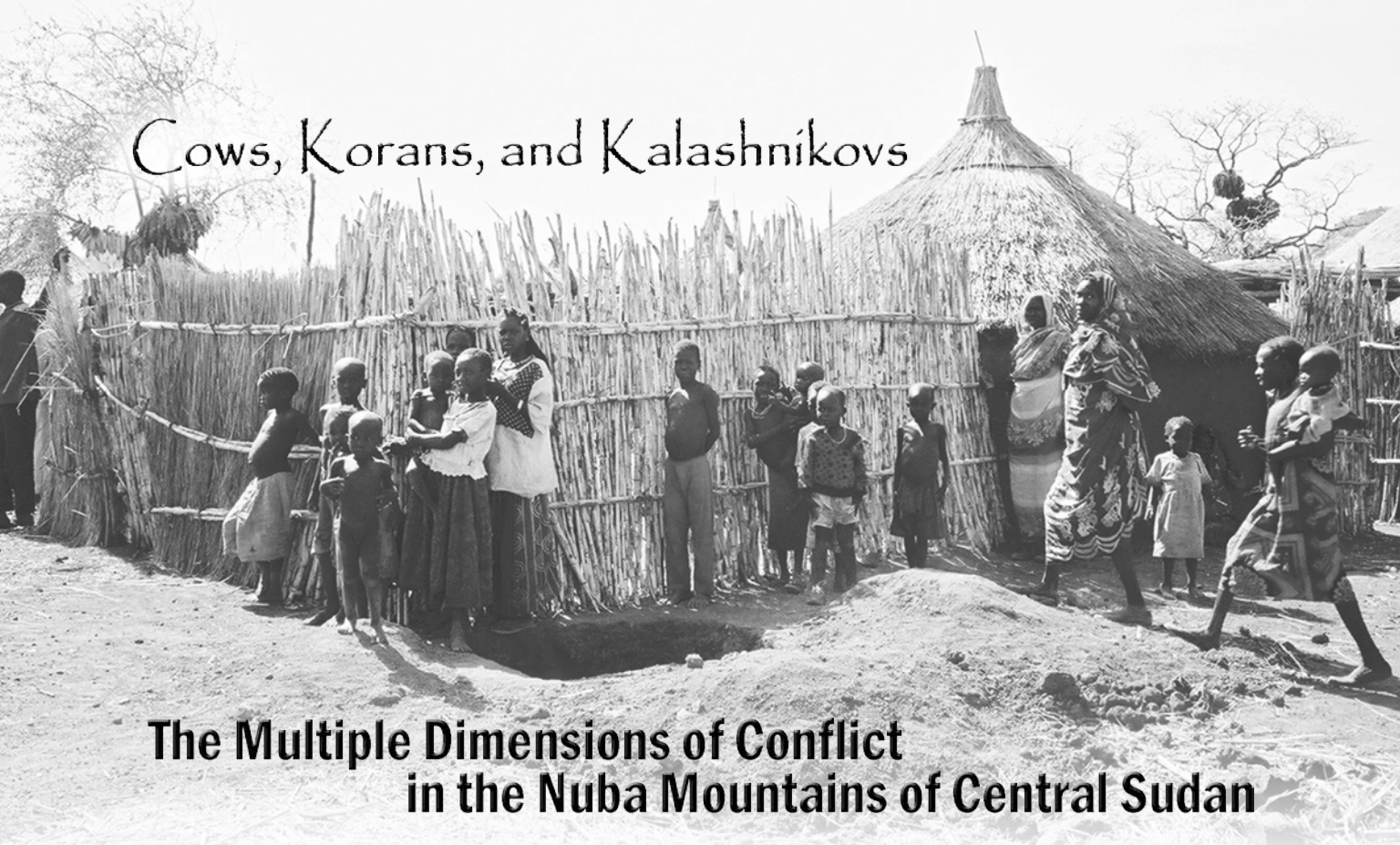
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*This article is dedicated to the memory of Lieutenant Colonel Mike McMahon, squadron commander of 3-4 Cavalry, who made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan in November 2004. His focus on reconstruction and civil-military operations made a difference in the lives of thousands of Afghans. LTC McMahon's untiring efforts and progressive-minded leadership will not be forgotten.*

# Cows, Korans, and Kalashnikovs



## The Multiple Dimensions of Conflict in the Nuba Mountains of Central Sudan

Major Christopher H. Varhola, U.S. Army Reserve, Ph.D.

*AUTHOR'S NOTE: With continued massive human suffering and violence in Darfur, there is discussion about increasing U.S. and international military involvement in the Sudan. With that in mind, this article provides an overview of the 2002 cease-fire monitoring mission in the Nuba Mountains of central Sudan. Singular, bounded, and often inchoate causes—"It is a religious conflict"; "It is a competition for diminishing resources"—are often given as explanations for the conflict there and in Darfur. These explanations are not wrong in themselves, but they are inaccurate and misleading, if one examines them in isolation. The discord in the Nuba Mountains, for example, predates the actual fighting that began in the 1980s and has roots more complex than ethnic or racial difference between the Arab (primarily Islamic) North and African (mainly Christian) South. The current conflict is the most recent product of historical enmities and clashes that coalesce along socioeconomic lines.*

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### Situation and Environment

THE NUBA MOUNTAINS lie in South Kordofan Province, between Sudan's Arab North and African South. They are inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups, including roughly 90 different African tribes. Although each tribe generally has its own language, the tribes are referred to collectively as Nuba. Over the past 18 years, the mountains have been the scene of heavy fighting between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).<sup>1</sup> In January 2002, with assistance and funding from the international community, the GoS and the SPLM signed a regional

PHOTO: Villagers of Shatt Daman observe the release of Sudan People's Liberation Army prisoners by the Government of Sudan, June 2002. The prisoners had been taken in violation of the cease-fire agreement, and the Joint Military Commission negotiated their release. (courtesy of the author)



cease-fire agreement (CFA). The CFA applied to South Kordofan Province, but was referred to as simply the Nuba Mountains CFA. Meanwhile, fighting continued elsewhere in the Sudan.

From April to July 2002, I served as a cease-fire monitor with the Joint Military Commission (JMC), a multinational diplomatic observer group comprised of representatives from 11 countries. The international monitors were combined with representatives from the GoS and the SPLM to form teams, and the teams were charged with patrolling the Nuba Mountains to resolve or report CFA violations. The JMC divided its operations into five sectors, with a team assigned to monitor each sector, as depicted in figure 1.

The international monitors came from a variety of backgrounds. Most were military, although France's representative was a foreign service officer and Switzerland's was a professor of anthropology who had lived in the Sudan for 17 years. The representatives from the warring parties were military officers. My sector team consisted of an American (me), a Swede, two members of the SPLM, and two officers from the GoS. In our capacity as monitors, we traveled extensively by car, by helicopter, and on foot. Our mission was to identify and solve issues and cease-fire violations at the lowest level. This required an understanding of the area's cultural, socioeconomic, and political context, as well as each group's military tactics. Our methodology included talking to civil and military leaders on each side and conducting random surveys and interviews with cross-sections of the local population.

South Kordofan's population is a mix of roughly 1.5 million Arabs and Africans. As with virtually any ethnic grouping, however, these distinctions are blurry and socially constructed. In territory, the province is slightly smaller than the state of Maine, with the Nuba Mountains occupying roughly two-

thirds of the province. The mountains are low and rugged with broad valleys in between, and the area is semiarid. The terrain was challenging. We could not have accomplished our mission without our two helicopters, which we kept constantly in use.

The CFA restricted military forces from both sides to specific areas within the province. This separated the forces to lessen the chances of any intentional or unintentional eruption of hostilities. The SPLM held Sector I, which contained their headquarters. Sector II was largely government controlled and contained the provincial capital of Kadugli. Another sector was demilitarized, and the remaining two sectors contained the front lines and each side's military forces. In an extension of the historical pattern of Nubian tribes seeking refuge in the mountains from Arab slave raiders, the SPLM generally controlled the mountains and the government mainly controlled the valleys and open areas. During the dry season, the government had the tactical advantage due to its use of wheeled transport over limited road networks and the lack of concealment afforded to the SPLM from aerial observation. During the rainy season, however, when the roads became impassable and it was easy to hide from GoS helicopters, the advantage shifted to the SPLM.

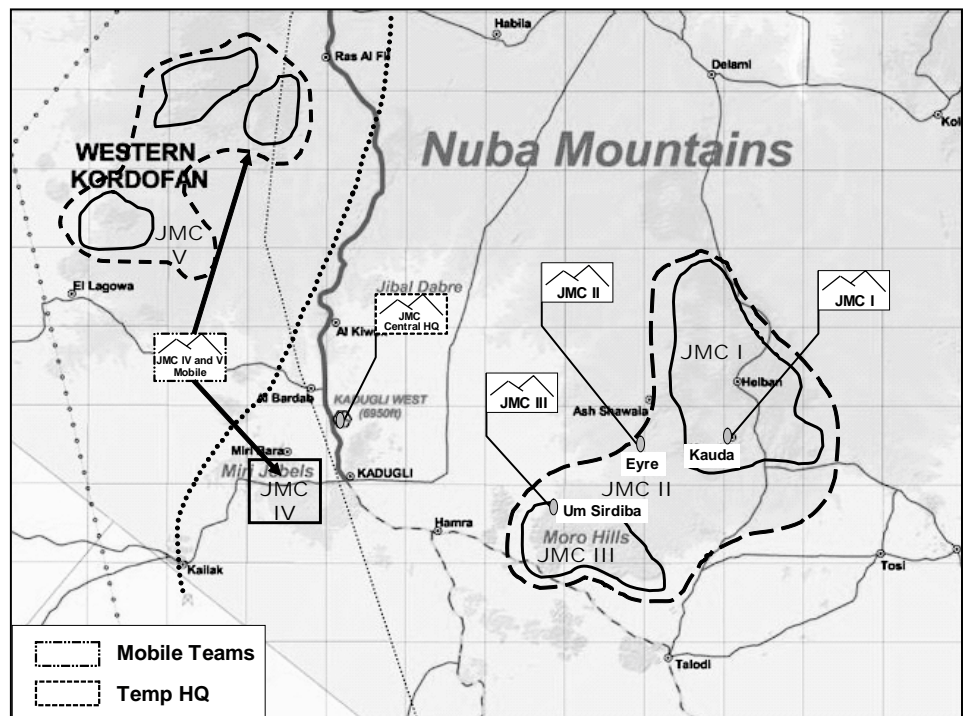


Figure 1. Joint Military Commission Sectors.

## War and Economics, Politics, Religion

A trip by air around South Kordofan reveals both the obvious and subtle effects of war. Burned out and destroyed villages, for instance, are a common sight. Fertile land in the valleys goes untillied while at the same time there is extensive agriculture and terracing in the SPLM-controlled mountains. Villages in the mountains are spread out, their buildings dispersed, to make them less attractive to government air strikes. For defensive purposes, village houses are located on high ground, in proximity to the multiple small and marginal agricultural areas. In contrast, villages in the valleys are generally circular in pattern and located near a well. Government positions ring each village, and heavy weapons are always pointed in the direction of the mountains from which the SPLM are likely to strike. In other words, SPLM forces are generally postured to defend against air strikes, while GoS forces are prepared to defend against small, irregular raiding parties.

Historically, Islam has had both an ideological and a practical attraction to its various adherents in the province. Kordofan was where a Mahdist revolt against Egyptian and British rule began in 1881 and where the Mahdi's base was strongest. His support came from the *ansar* (the "helpers," after volunteers who helped the Prophet Mohammed spread Islam), the *mujahadeen*, and the *jellaba* (influential Arab traders). Each of these bases, although transformed, still exists in the Sudan today, and they support the GoS.

In 1989, the GoS legitimized Arab militias and recruited Arab civilians into an umbrella organization known as the Popular Defense Force (PDF). In the Nuba Mountains, the PDF contains three groupings: the *bagherra* (basically armed herders), the *mujahadeen*, and civil defense forces. A brief survey of each group highlights different dimensions of the conflict. The *bagherra*, for instance, have economic incentives; the *mujahadeen* are ideologically motivated; the *jellaba* seek both economic and political advantage.

Military operations in the Nuba Mountains provide tangible economic benefit to the *bagherra*. Translated from Arabic, *bagherra* means *cow people*, from the Arabic word *bagher*, for cow. *Bagherras* take pride in the word *bagherra* in the same sense that Americans might take pride in being

called cowboys. There are Africans who herd cows, but the *bagherra* take pains to identify themselves as Islamic and Arab. In 1881, the *bagherra* supported the Mahdi with large units of cavalry. Traditionally slave raiders who took—and still take—slaves both for sale and local use, the *bagherra* have been in the Nuba Mountains for several hundred years. In the past, they often came into conflict with African and Arab farmers over slaves and the control of water and grazing resources.

The government uses the *bagherra* to consolidate control over areas, including land formerly held by the SPLM. In this respect, the *bagherra* often serve as a buffer between SPLM and GoS forces. The *bagherra* also consolidate the GoS's position in rear areas, alleviating the need for GoS Army regulars to do so.

In effect, the government's use of the *bagherra* validates the *bagherra*'s historical practice of capturing new territory to gain greater access to grazing land. The *bagherra* claim that they use the AK-47 and G3 assault rifles provided by the GoS only to protect their herds from bandits; in general, they deny being employed as an irregular offensive military force. Individually, however, *bagherra* members will admit to being part of the government militia. The GoS, for its part, openly denies ever having armed the *bagherra* militias; rather, it declares that it has armed only fixed units of the PDF that have a civil defense role. The government's attempt at dissociating itself from the *bagherra* stems from the latter's current penchant for using government-supplied weapons to raid both Arabs and Africans. For the GoS, arming the *bagherra* was like opening Pandora's Box: the tribes generally cannot be controlled.

The GoS does control, and admits to controlling, the area's civil defense forces. Like reserve units in other countries, the civil defense forces are armed and trained by the government and undergo periodic refresher training. To some extent, however, the civil defense units represent collective defensive measures taken by townspeople, traders, and villagers. Although the GoS uses the forces for offensive operations, they mainly fulfill local security functions. For instance, in one village of several hundred residents that I visited, there were no GoS police or military present; armed PDF who worked without pay guarded the village full-time. The village was



not affluent, and it subsisted through agriculture and herding. It could ill afford to waste manpower by maintaining military forces, but it did so because it needed protection from bandits and the SPLM.

In 1881, the *ansar* provided both ideological influence and military support, mainly as infantry, to the Mahdi. Today, “*ansar*” denotes the mujahadeen mobilized by a 1992 fatwa to combat the SPLM in the Nuba Mountains. These volunteers were integrated into the PDF, received 45 days of military and religious training, and were used in conjunction with regular GoS military units, usually preceding regular forces in often fanatical charges to attrit or fix SPLM units so that the regular forces could gain tactical advantage. The *ansar-mujahadeen* charged straight up hills against dug-in SPLM soldiers

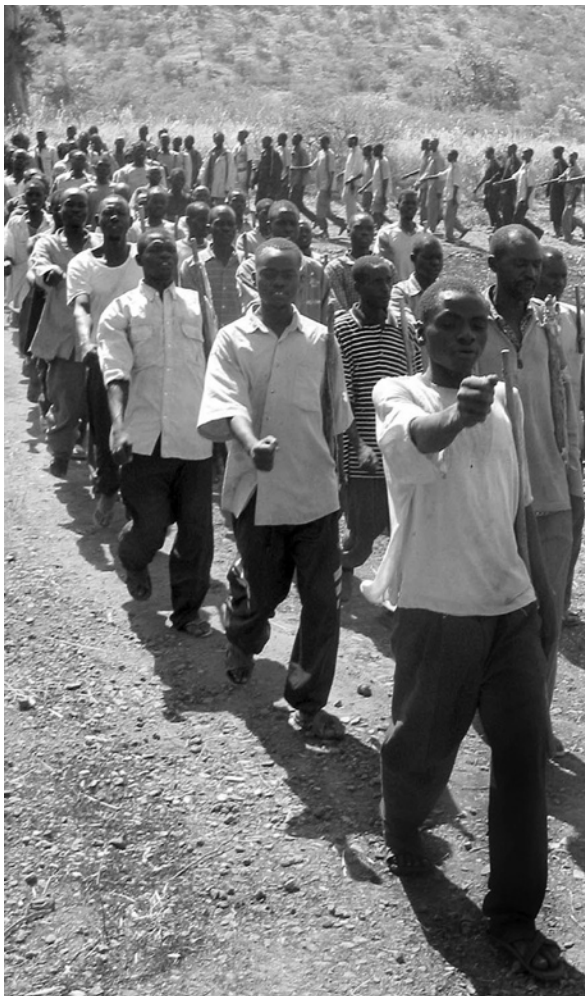
armed with automatic weapons, took high numbers of casualties, made few gains, and often ended up helping the SPLM, who collected weapons and ammunition off the dead fighters.

The mujahadeen ceased operations in 2003, but their appearance on the battlefield underscored the religious dimension of the Sudanese conflict. In 1983, the government exacerbated already existent tensions by institutionalizing Islam in the form of Sharia law. Many Sudanese did not accept Sharia wholeheartedly, even in the predominately Muslim north, while many others, especially non-Muslims in the southern and central portions of the country, considered Sharia foreign and rejected it.

While the nature of the conflict in Sudan is often categorized as being predominately religious, this is a gross overgeneralization. Religion is important to the Sudanese, but they are less doctrinaire about it and less identified by it than might be supposed. For example, Christianity in the Sudan often has more to do with a negative aspect of identity: it represents a unified ideological and political opposition to Islam and the GoS more than it does adherence to an orthodox set of beliefs.<sup>2</sup> Islam, too, has a political aspect as great or greater than its cultural and religious orientations. Consider the case of two brothers, Boutros and Abdelrahman, whom I met during a prisoner exchange in April 2002.

Boutros was an SPLM officer and GoS prisoner released as part of the exchange. He held the rank of lieutenant and professed to have been in the SPLM for 16 years. When I questioned him about his identity, he stated unequivocally that he was Sudanese first and Nubian second. Additionally, although he was born and raised as a Christian, he had two wives, one at his rebel base in the mountains and one at his home village in a government-controlled valley. He acknowledged that this violated the tenets of Christianity, but stated that it was an integral and accepted part of his culture. He made no mention of his tribe. Abdelrahman was a soldier in a GoS unit occupying the village of Shatt, roughly 30 kilometers from Kadugli. When I entered Shatt with Boutros, he and Abdelrahman immediately embraced and invited me to join them for a cup of tea.

Boutros (Peter) is clearly a Christian name, while Abdelrahman is clearly Islamic. I assumed that when they referred to themselves as brothers, the two men were referring to some sort of metaphorical



AFP

Fighters of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) train at a base in Sudan's Nuba Mountains region, 29 November 2003. A Nuba Mountains cease-fire signed in January 2003 permits routine training but forbids enlargement of SPLA or government forces in the region.



**Brothers Boutros (on the right) and Abdelrahman in the village of Shatt in the Sudan immediately after Boutros's release from GoS captivity in April 2002.**

kinship based on a common nationality or origin. However, their relationship appeared inordinately close, and upon further questioning I ascertained that they were actually biological brothers. In short, the two were born as Christians to Christian parents. While in his early teens, however, Abdelrahman was sent to Khartoum, where he eventually joined the GoS army and changed his name to the Muslim Abdelrahman. He explained to me that this made integration into the military easier and advancement more likely.

In a similar vein, one of the SPLM monitors whom I worked with was named Mohamed, yet he stated that he was a Christian. He also explained that although the SPLM had a significant number of Muslims in it, he felt that advancement was more likely as a Christian.

As these cases suggest, Nubian identity, and in particular religious identification, is situational, subject to change for economic, social, or other reasons. This is attested to by the large number of conversions between the two faiths based on the changing military situation.

## Mission of the JMC

The JMC's purpose was to observe, report, and resolve violations of the cease-fire, to which both sides had agreed. The commission had to be seen as impartial, and it needed to analyze situations objectively in order to take appropriate action (or not take action). Because the national and religious affiliations of the monitors could be perceived as

undermining their objectivity and neutrality, most of the group received specialized regional training prior to deployment. The JMC's European members, however, received neither regional nor language preparation. Placing regional and cultural specialists in the headquarters and in key sectors partially offset this shortcoming, as did the hiring of local translators.

Unfortunately, translators can come with a cost. One problem with using them is that the employer becomes associated with them, and that association can undermine mission success. This is especially true in a region where religious identity is often tantamount to political identity: a team employing a Christian translator, for example, may have problems when it tries to deal with Muslims. Translators can also exert a disproportionate influence over operations by what they say, do not say, or emphasize. A complaint the JMC received highlights this problem.

Six Sudanese evangelist ministers reported to the JMC that GoS internal security forces in a nearby village had beaten them, held them for four days in a location with no sanitation facilities, and given them inadequate food and water. They said they had been abused for ministering to the religious needs of a village with a population of roughly two thousand people. The specific act that had gotten them into trouble was holding a prayer meeting for 50 or so people in the open air on the town outskirts.

Without a doubt, the complaint pointed to a violation of the principles of freedom of movement and freedom to practice religion guaranteed in the CFA. However, given the political dimensions of religion, acting on this complaint merited caution. The GoS viewed the evangelical ministers as intentionally spreading subversive messages and politicizing large groups of people, many of them supporters or potential supporters of the SPLM. That particular area had been the scene of heavy fighting in which the PDF had driven the SPLM

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from the area. Consequently, the ministers' actions were seen as an attempt to reintroduce the SPLM and to provoke the GoS.

Without recognizing the implications of what he was doing, one member of the JMC acted on the complaint and drove to the village in a JMC vehicle on a Sunday. The predominately Muslim population observed this and subsequently came to identify the JMC as an agency involved in promoting the spread of Christianity. This undermined our credibility, and in the following two weeks, two death threats were made against JMC members. For complaining, the ministers were publicly whipped on their backs and buttocks by Arab villagers.

The interpreters who translated the original complaint were Christian acquaintances of the evangelical ministers, and this complicated the case. Rather than simply translating the complaint and putting it into the queue for assessment and prioritization, the interpreters constantly reintroduced the subject and warned of the implications that could result from the JMC failing to take action. While I am not advocating inaction in such cases, a subtler approach and more thorough gathering of information would have been prudent. The entire team should have gone to the scene of the complaint with GoS and SPLM representatives and talked to local leaders and a cross-section of the population. Traveling as a team maintains the appearance of objectivity, allows both sides to learn of the situation, and lessens the potential of the JMC being used for ulterior purposes.

Overall, complaints posed a challenge to the JMC because they could not be collected in an efficient, effective manner. The initial JMC policy, that all complaints had to be delivered in writing to a commission headquarters, was part of the problem. We had one headquarters in the GoS area and one headquarters in the SPLM area. The large distances involved in getting to them and the dearth of motorized transport in the region drastically limited the information to which the JMC was exposed. The policy defeated the purpose of the sound technique of using roving, language-capable teams to make contact with a wide cross-section of the population. The requirement to submit a complaint in writing also did not take into account the low literacy rate in the Nuba, particularly among women and the elderly, who are a valuable source of information.

Minimal staffing also affected the JMC's operations. Given our numbers, it was impossible for us to investigate all complaints lodged and still conduct the random patrolling that was so critical to ensure cease-fire compliance. And we dealt with a large number of alleged and actual cease-fire violations. My sector alone recorded 47 during a three-month period. There were several notable intentional violations of the CFA by both sides, but we found that most of the breaches were unintentional, the result of lack of information, poor leadership, or conflation of a civil issue with the military situation. This being the case, a major portion of our duties was to educate people about the cease-fire agreement.

Depending on the source, SPLM members and baghera were characterized as bandits or as legitimate soldiers. It is often difficult in a conflict to distinguish between the two. Like many guerrilla forces, the SPLM is not centralized either geographically or authoritatively, which makes holding it accountable for crimes and violence in its "territory" difficult. Banditry emanating from SPLM territory posed one of the greatest threats not only to the safety of the people and the monitors, but to the cease-fire process. One can refer to bandits in such situations as "spoilers" or as a "conflict constituency"—groups or individuals who benefit from the lawlessness inherent in armed conflict. One such case of banditry provides insight into the problems the JMC experienced due to economic violence.

On 29 June 2002, the JMC duty officer received a phone call from a GoS Army headquarters that a resident of a village roughly six miles away had been shot and killed. The incident was given to me to handle, and within 15 minutes of receiving it, I and a team that included an SPLM monitor, a GoS Army officer, and our camp doctor, a German who specialized in human rights abuses, were on board one of our helicopters. When we landed on the outskirts of the village, village elders, the commander of the local PDF unit, and the commander of the local GoS unit met us. There were no civil police in the area due to its designation as a combat zone.

The deceased was roughly 40 years old and a baghera member of the Hawazmi tribe. After obtaining background information, we asked to view the body, which had been found approximately eight hours earlier. We found that the individual was wearing a military uniform. A cursory forensic



examination allowed us to conclude that he had been shot once in the back from a distance, twice in the heart from extremely close range (based on burn marks), and at least once in the head from close range, which resulted in the upper half of his head being removed. We established the time of death at about 12 hours before our examination. This corresponded with accounts from the man's family members, who stated that he had been missing since the night before. The deceased was reported to have been unarmed and to have been herding 26 goats, which were missing. The tracks of the goats and of two individuals were found going in the direction of SPLM territory, about four miles distant.

Was the herder a victim of banditry or of an act of war that violated the CFA? He wore a military uniform because he was a member of the PDF, and he had been killed by marauders who retreated into SPLM territory, but his murder probably wasn't an official SPLM military operation. Even so, there was little doubt that the SPLM had armed his killers, that the killers were SPLM members, and that they had taken advantage of SPLM-controlled territory to evade capture.

This crime illustrates the complex, hybrid civil-military nature of the problems peacekeepers often face in South Kordofan. It also could have had dire consequences for the cease-fire. We were afraid that members of the deceased's tribe would arm themselves and take retribution against the group believed responsible for the killing. Families and tribes on each side were also armed members of military organizations, so the civil aspects of this act could have been linked to the military dimension, and the incident could easily have expanded into a larger conflict, a fact that was not lost on the GoS soldiers in the area. To his credit, their commander put them on a high state of alert and directed them to prevent any baghera from carrying arms. The case was resolved when the SPLM commander agreed to fly to the scene of the killing, issue a guarantee that the SPLM was not responsible, and cooperate with the GoS to find the killers.

Before the war, traditional methods to resolve conflict included councils made up of the concerned villages' leaders. However, with the establishment of separate GoS and SPLM areas, such lateral communication was largely terminated. Our method to resolve this issue was to reestablish—or in some

***Slavery...exists in various forms throughout the Nuba Mountains, and...cannot be examined in isolation from its economic, political, social, and historical contexts.***

cases, newly establish—channels of communication between village leaders, GoS forces, and, most important, SPLM leaders, who were often in remote locations. The channels of communication took the form of area councils comprised of village leaders from both sides of the fighting. JMC air and ground assets facilitated transportation to the councils to bypass front lines and hazardous areas.

Another type of complaint the JMC commonly received had to do with slavery. One such case involved a 13-year-old boy shot in a baghera village. The boy was not from that area, and interviews indicated that his parents had sold him as labor. Slavery, defined as the involuntary servitude of a person who can be bought or sold as a commodity, exists in various forms throughout the Nuba Mountains, and, like other elements of the overall situation, cannot be examined in isolation from its economic, political, social, and historical contexts. Slavery is not simple to categorize, but for discussion purposes, I will divide it into three broad areas, two of which I have experience with.

The first category is an old, well-known one: Arab tribesmen raid African villages to gather slaves. The Hawazmi tribes of baghera, for instance, have historically been slave raiders.<sup>3</sup> For the most part, the Hawazmi are agropastoralists who tend to reside in the area between GoS and SPLM positions. Their type of active, forced slavery is enabled by tacit government approval (and/or a complete lack of government control). Undoubtedly, the government did not want its complicity in such an outrage exposed to the world and, partly for this reason, there was no open slave raiding in the Nuba Mountains while I was there. There is significant evidence, however, of slave raiding having occurred throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>4</sup>

A second, more common, and largely overlooked form of involuntary servitude takes the form of



economic transactions between different tribes in which poor African families sell a child for a cow or a number of goats. This exchange results in one less mouth for a poor family to feed, a significant consideration given recent famines and the constant scarcity of food. Such transactions usually involve African Nubian families selling or trading individual children to baghera. The child is then raised with the new tribe and generally used as a herder and agricultural laborer.

The last category of slavery, arranged marriage, is perhaps the subtlest, most accepted, and most pervasive kind. Males frequently have multiple wives and daughters, whom they often view as they do their livestock—like commodities. I commonly encountered this type of human transaction in both “African” and “Arab” villages.

Typically, after I visited a village several times and was introduced to its elders, it was just a matter of time before the discussion shifted to my marital status and why I did not yet have a Sudanese bride. (The feeling was that there was something dysfunctional with me because I did not take a wife after living somewhere for several months). Despite my explaining that I had an American wife and would be returning to America, the typical response was that my only obligation would be to send support payments back to the Sudan. While this may not agree with the “traditional” image of slavery, the female, usually an adolescent, had no say in the matter. The transaction was between the family and the would-be husband—the female was little more than a commodity to be used for pleasure and reproduction. Less attention is paid to situations of this nature than to the less common occurrence of entire villages being captured and sold.

The latter two forms of slavery are an integral and accepted part of the collective cultures in the area. Efforts to halt them would be challenging and counterproductive to any cease-fire and mediation efforts.

## Neutrality and Humanitarian Aid

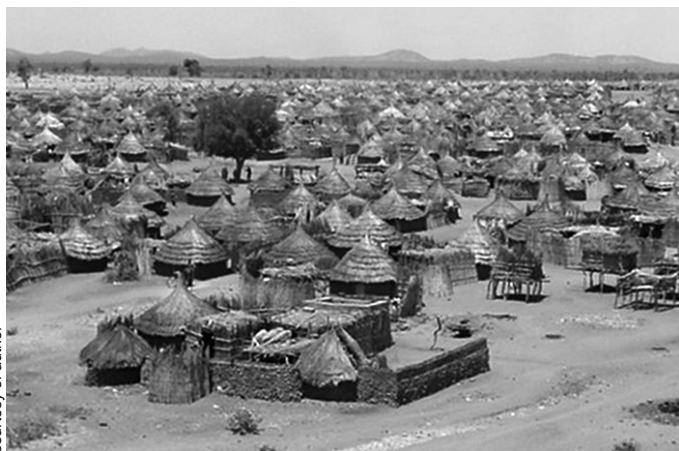
For both the warring parties and for the JMC, the local population is the center of gravity. The monitoring mission faced the challenging mandate to ensure humanitarian aid flowed to all areas in South Kordofan, yet, because the JMC’s success rested on its ability to be (and be perceived as) neutral, any association with groups not seen as neutral

undermined the mission’s credibility. Such groups included the UN and aid organizations.

Although many in the UN and nongovernmental organization (NGO) communities thought of humanitarian aid as neutral, it mainly benefited the SPLM because it diminished GoS efforts at population control and resettlement. The UN sent flights to airstrips in even the remotest regions. In areas where it was impossible to land, humanitarian aid was dropped by parachute. The delivery of aid to the SPLM areas of the Nuba Mountains started in May 2002 under the parameters of the CFA and the aegis of the JMC. However, given the control the SPLM exercised over food distribution and the close ties that some international and nongovernmental organizations have with the SPLM, food aid often went directly to the SPLM, from whence it was distributed to both the combatants and the local population (including SPLM families). Humanitarian aid thus served as a logistical enabling factor, permitting the SPLM to conduct and sustain combat operations. I make this observation not as a comment on the morality of providing aid, but merely to point out that this fact is often lost on some of the groups promoting humanitarian aid that do not see their organizations as actively supporting one side or the other.

The GoS attempted to use aid and the threat of starvation to control the population and limit the SPLM’s influence. This tactic is not new in counterinsurgency warfare, because government control of population centers precludes insurgents from gaining bases of support. Consequently, few people have the luxury of remaining neutral during a counterinsurgency. The occupation of a village, the forced conscription of its residents, and the appropriation of its commodities to supply a warring party may draw even remote villages into a conflict. In the Sudan, the GoS may categorize a village supplying the SPLM with food (even unwillingly) as hostile and target it, a response very apparent in the destroyed, burned-out villages that are a common sight throughout the Nuba Mountains. The GoS destroyed these villages and resettled their inhabitants in “peace camps,” which have become a focal point of international criticism against the GoS.

Peace camps are usually existing villages that have been greatly expanded and are controlled through a GoS agency known as the Peace and Resettlement Commission. They are located in the



Government of Sudan peace camp in the Nuba Mountains.

valleys and the plains, where they can be easily defended, not in the mountainous areas controlled by the SPLM. While villages in SPLM areas are spread out to capitalize on smallholder agriculture and to avoid being easy targets for GoS forces, peace camps are extremely concentrated. The area around them has generally been cleared of vegetation in a circle approximately one kilometer wide to prevent SPLM forces from infiltrating them and residents from leaving them. GoS-affiliated NGOs and food programs sustain the camps, and GoS soldiers (generally a platoon of infantry) are garrisoned in them.

The primary GoS agency coordinating relief in the Nuba Mountains is the Humanitarian Action Committee (HAC), which, despite its name, is a political organization with the mission of coordinating NGO operations in government areas and controlling NGO access to SPLM areas. For example, the HAC approves international humanitarian flights into rebel areas, and despite the dire circumstances of much of the population, in April 2002 alone it cancelled 109 scheduled flights into SPLM-held areas. The government claimed the HAC cancelled the flights to prevent weapons and ammunition from being smuggled to the SPLM.

Since one of the JMC's main goals was to reinstate relief flights, the government in Khartoum agreed to allow World Food Program (WFP) flights into SPLM areas if JMC monitors inspected the flights. The planes I inspected contained subsistence crop seeds and agricultural tools such as sickles and hoes. The WFP's intent was to enable the local population to begin planting before the rainy season began in

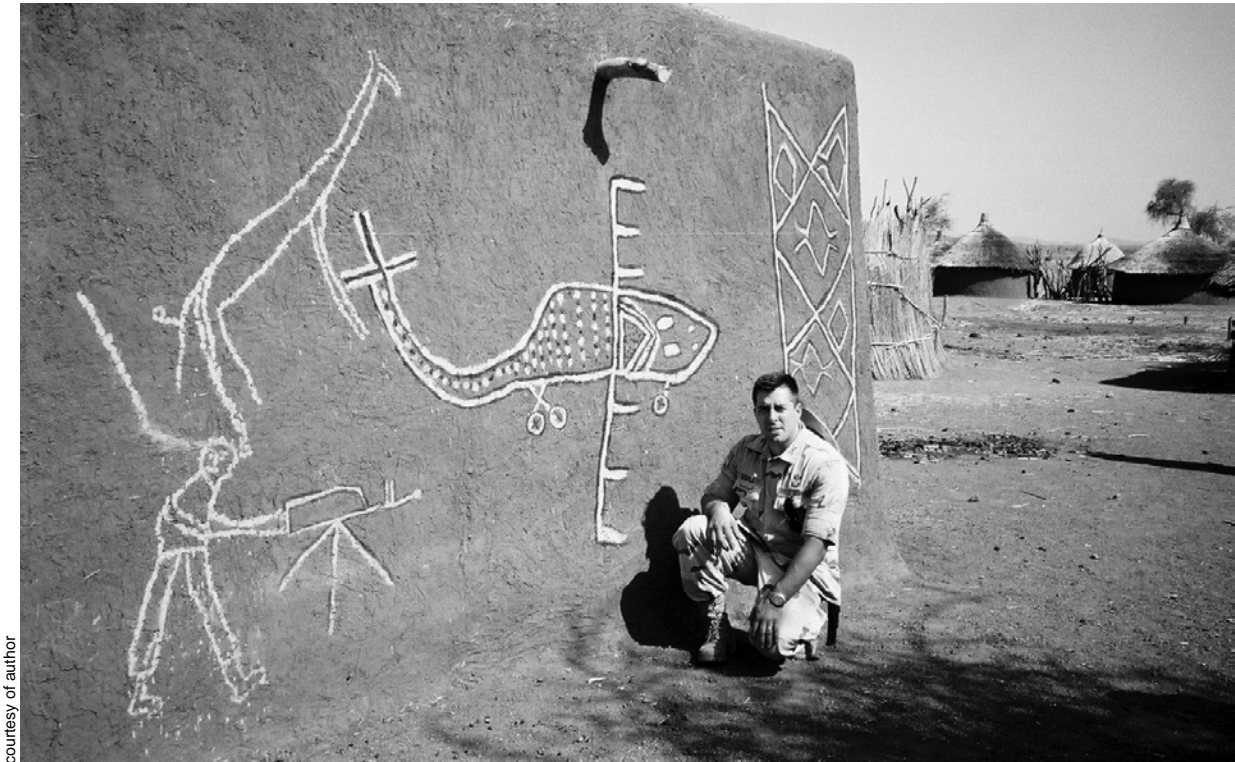
June. Knowledge of planting cycles thus became a critical element in the cease-fire's success.

The SPLM is not concentrated in garrisons. Its personnel are dispersed over large areas and generally live in family units. SPLM members who have come from the south have tended to take local wives. Because shortages of food do not affect just the SPLM, but their families as well, differentiating between humanitarian aid and military aid is problematic.

Food can be a powerful weapon, and the GoS uses it as such, not only by denying food imports into SPLM areas, but also by destroying crops. The GoS fosters famine conditions in the hope that SPLM soldiers will desert and resettle with their families in peace camps. In response, the SPLM in the past prevented people from leaving territory it controlled, even if starvation conditions were present. As this case illustrates, humanitarian aid can subvert the government's efforts to use food as a weapon against the rebels.

Throughout the Sudan, Islamic and Arabic groups have criticized humanitarian aid as a tool of foreign domination meant to undermine existing economic structures at the groups' expense. A 1992 fatwa, for instance, refers to the "forces of arrogance who have been supplying [the SPLM] with food and arms."<sup>5</sup> Propaganda that accompanied humanitarian aid delivered by the Red Crescent, an Islamic NGO, also capitalized on this theme. Proselytizing members of a religion often accompany Western aid, and Muslim clerics from the Red Crescent frequently accompanied Red Crescent aid. In the Nuba Mountains, these Muslim clerics (typically from Egypt or Saudi Arabia) spoke directly against Western aid and the JMC, accusing both of being tools of a Western plan to destroy Islam. This complaint was not unique to Islamic NGOs.

Some aid groups clearly sided with the SPLM and refused to operate **equally in government and SPLM** areas. For instance, **one U.S. NGO that operated only in SPLM areas** was critical of the CFA since it felt the government was not operating in good faith. The NGO's own partisanship, though, was not in doubt. Not only did its representatives discourage SPLM members from embracing the cease-fire, but they also combined proselytizing with aid distribution and donated used tractors to SPLM members for military purposes. This is noteworthy because agricultural tractors are the only vehicles able to move



courtesy of author

The author next to a clay drawing in a village that was a former SPLA stronghold. The drawing depicts a GoS helicopter as a snake being shot at by SPLA fighters. The snake is a metaphor for the devil. The giraffe is significant because there are no giraffes in the area, most likely indicating that the artist was from Southern Sudan.

along the muddy roads during the rainy season. The tractor violation was discovered when Mohamed Tutu, chief of intelligence for the SPLM in South Kordofan, was killed along with five others when the tractor he was on struck an antitank mine. The tractor had come from the aforementioned NGO, and the occupants were not farmers, but SPLM soldiers.

## Keys to Success

At the direction of the GoS, the cease-fire monitoring mission in the Nuba Mountains ended in 2005. During its 3-year existence, the mission made some mistakes, but overall it successfully maintained a cessation of hostilities that had been ongoing for 20 years. The JMC's success was the result of constant analysis of the social, economic, religious, and cultural factors that influenced the conflict. In the Sudan, we were acutely aware that although it might take years to build a cease-fire agreement, it could take only seconds to destroy one. As a result, it was critical to understand what the incentives were for disrupting the cease-fire and who had them, and to know how the work of NGOs

and other international organizations could either further the process or undermine it.

In an unstable, multidimensional environment like the Sudan's, dogmatic claims are more often an indication of ignorance than of intelligence. One fact, however, is certain: military forces are often necessary to maintain a cease-fire or to keep the peace, but military force alone will not be sufficient. Conflict has many overlapping, mutually transforming dimensions, and success in stopping it requires knowledgeable personnel, informed planning, and tremendous flexibility. **MR**

## NOTES

1. The military wing of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) is the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). In practice in the Sudan, the terms are interchangeable. I have opted to use SPLM for this essay.

2. Mohamed Salih, "Some Methodological Problems in the Study of Nationalism and Nation-Building in the Sudan," *Bayreuth Journal of African Studies Series 1*: (1984).

3. P.M. Holt, *The Modern History of the Sudan: From the Funj Sultanate to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), no further information provided.

4. Alex De Waal, *Facing Genocide: The Nuba of Sudan* (London: African Rights Publications, 1995), no further information provided.

5. In Muslim writings and speeches of this nature, the terms "forces of arrogance" or "the Great Arrogance" invariably refer to the United States.





# MANAGING COUNTERINSURGENCY: LESSONS FROM MALAYA

Walter C. Ladwig III

*Without a reasonably efficient government machine, no programmes or projects, in the context of counterinsurgency, will produce the desired results.*

—Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*.<sup>1</sup>

**C**OMBATING AN INSURGENCY tests a government to its fullest. To succeed, the government must bring to bear all the elements of national power (political, military, and social) in a coordinated campaign. The absence of such coordination can result in a lack of clear authority, inadequate intelligence analysis, poorly integrated efforts by civilian agencies, and military operations that fail to achieve their desired effect.

The problem of achieving unity of effort is significantly more complicated for an outside power attempting to support a partner against an insurgency. The outside power must channel its efforts through the partner's political and social system, and success requires a high degree of coordination via management structures tailored to the needs of the specific situation.

The U.S. Army's recently released Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, recognizes the importance of effective coordination, advising that "military efforts are necessary and important to counterinsurgency efforts, but they are only effective when integrated into a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power."<sup>2</sup> It further recognizes that the traditional imperative of unity of command is not likely to be achieved in a counterinsurgency operation. "An insurgency's complex diplomatic, informational, military and economic context precludes military leaders from commanding all contributing organizations—and they should not try to do so. Interagency partners, NGOs, and private organizations have many interests and agendas that military forces cannot control . . . Nevertheless, military leaders should make every effort to ensure that COIN actions are as well integrated as possible."<sup>3</sup>

What are the mechanisms by which this interagency and inter-governmental integration can be achieved? FM 3-24 highlights the unity of effort achieved in Vietnam through the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support organization. Yet this is only one method of integrating civil and military efforts in counterinsurgency. The British achieved effective integration in a host of successful counterinsurgency campaigns through the employment of an executive-committee system. Among these campaigns was the Malayan Emergency, a British-led campaign against Communist guerrillas that lasted from 1948 to 1960. The Malayan Emergency is an example of successful coordination between the civil and military elements of government as well as between multiple nations. Making war by committee is not usually the best approach to military operations, but the British experience in Malaya is a case

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of a successful counterinsurgency effort conducted against the backdrop of a complex political arrangement. It demonstrates one method of achieving close coordination and effective management of civil and military resources.

The British effort in Malaya followed a familiar pattern: at the start of the insurgency, authorities lacked adequate command and coordination structures. Initial attempts to coordinate government efforts fell short. Only through a process of analysis and adjustment did an effective coordination structure eventually emerge: joint (civil-military) and combined (British-Malayan) executive committees directed the operational conduct of the counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout its history with irregular warfare, the United States has often found itself in the position of supporting an ally's counterinsurgency effort. Present circumstances suggest that this task will remain a challenge for the foreseeable future. When U.S. forces must wrestle with the problem of how to integrate supporting elements from the United States with the host-nation government to achieve unity of effort in a counterinsurgency campaign, history can offer a necessary supplement to existing doctrine to produce a complete answer. The Malayan Emergency is one such exemplary supplement.

## Pre-Emergency Malaya

Approximately the same size as England, with three-quarters of the country covered in thick jungle forests, Malaya was a guerrilla's paradise. Huge trees blocked out most of the sunlight in the coastal forests and swamps. A mountain chain extended 300 miles south from the border with Thailand, dividing the Malayan peninsula into two halves. Approximately 90 percent of the population lived in a coastal plain that extended 10 miles deep along the western coast of the peninsula.

In 1947, the area had a population of 5 million, of which 2.5 million were ethnic Malay, 2 million

were ethnic Chinese, and approximately half a million were Indian. Even though they made up nearly half the population, few Chinese were citizens—and there was no widespread support for extending citizen rights and privileges to the rest.<sup>5</sup>

Malaya's importance to the British in the post-war period cannot be overstated. At the time of the insurgency, Malayan exports, particularly rubber and tin, were the most important source of U.S. dollars in Britain's colonial empire. A serious disruption to Malayan industry would have had widespread economic repercussions for the entire British Commonwealth.<sup>6</sup>

At the outbreak of the Emergency, in 1948, the Federation of Malaya's newly established government was not configured to effectively conduct a coordinated counterinsurgency campaign. The Japanese occupation during World War II had destroyed most of the territory's pre-war administrative structure. According to one historian, "In much of the Malayan peninsula, the British presence ceased [and] colonial communities evaporated."<sup>7</sup> In many ways, the British-led government was starting anew in Malaya after Japanese forces there surrendered in 1945. The difficulties of governance were compounded by the fact that Malaya was not officially



Sergeant William Goldie of the 1st Battalion, the Loyal (North Lancashire) Regiment, searches a Malay cyclist on a road near Ipoh for supplies or material he might be smuggling through to the communist guerillas, 1957.

Imperial War Museum, D88057

a possession of the British Crown; rather, it was a group of nine British-protected Malay states and two settlements, each with its own ruler, organized as a federation. The leading British authority in Malaya was High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney, who had the power to make decisions about the conduct of defense and foreign relations. However, in the domestic sphere, his proposals required the approval of the federation's Legislative Council, which consisted of a handful of senior civil servants and departmental officials, as well as representatives of each Malay state and 50 appointed members representing different interests—employers, labor, industry, commerce, and so forth.

Gurney was limited in the scope of domestic legislation he could impose on the rulers of individual Malay states, similar to the way a U.S. president is limited in directing governors of states to take action. As one cabinet official noted, "The Malay states... are a powerful force, and the federal machine can only work with their confidence and goodwill."<sup>8</sup>

The government of Malaya was administered by the Malayan Civil Service, an elite group of less than 300 senior civil servants, the majority of whom were British. A few thousand middle managers, 75 percent of whom were also British, supported the government's operations. At the bottom level of the government, 80 percent of the employees were Malay. The relatively small size of the civil service hindered its ability to perform its duties, particularly when the Communist insurgency challenged the government.

A sultan ruled each of the nine Malay states with his *menteri besar* (literally, "big minister") advising him. A British advisor assigned to each state also provided guidance, but possessed no executive powers—his ability to influence events depended strictly on his powers of persuasion.

The Malay states were subdivided into 71 districts, each headed by a district officer, typically a member of the Malayan Civil Service. Duties and roles varied across districts, but the district officer had a wide range of responsibilities, including functioning as a chief magistrate and collector of land revenues, in addition to performing ceremonial duties.<sup>9</sup>

Coordinating the actions of nine semi-sovereign states via a federal government was a cumbersome process and one not well suited to confronting an insurgent threat—particularly one that crossed state boundaries with impunity.

## Security Forces

The police were primarily responsible for domestic security in the federation. In 1948, there were only about 10,000 police officers across Malaya, the force being 2,000 officers below its authorized strength. Police personnel were under the command of the chief police officer of their state. The federation government could request states to take particular police actions, but by and large, it could only act as a coordinating authority. As a final recourse, the federation government could call on the British Army for support if the police faced a challenge beyond their ability.

The British Army in Malaya was under the command of General Headquarters, Far Eastern Land Forces, and possessed a combined 12 infantry battalions and an artillery battalion for Malaya and neighboring Singapore. The military forces in Malaya were not on a wartime footing in 1948. Less than half the soldiers in country were combat troops, and most were in training or performing peacetime administrative duties.

## The Malayan Races Liberation Army

Opposing the Malayan Government was the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA)—the armed wing of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP).<sup>10</sup> The MRLA was the successor to the Communist-led resistance group that had fought against the Japanese occupation during World War II. Despite its name, the MRLA did not represent Malaya's races in any real sense. Like the Communist Party itself, over 95 percent of the MRLA's membership was ethnic Chinese. In the early months of the emergency, the MRLA had 7,000 armed fighters and 30,000 to 40,000 active supporters, known as the Min Yuen, who provided money, food, intelligence, and communications support.<sup>11</sup>

The Communist strategy was to carry out widespread attacks on civil officials and the managers of rubber plantations and tin mines in an attempt to disrupt Malaya's economy. The MRLA believed that such attacks would force the government to concentrate its forces to protect its communications and supply lines, allowing the Communists to establish liberated areas in the places security forces could not cover. Establishing revolutionary administrations within these liberated areas would

legitimize the Communists in the eyes of the population and provide bases for the further training of MRLA military forces. As the guerrillas increased in strength, they would expand their liberated areas and field larger military units, until they could eventually force the government to surrender.<sup>12</sup>

## The Emergency: Early Responses, 1948-1950

In early June 1948, a series of violent, politically inspired crimes shattered Malaya's post-war tranquility. The pattern of violence implicated the Malaysian Communist Party: the targets were the managers of large estates and local leaders of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist) Party. The simultaneous murder of three European planters and a Chinese supervisor in Perak state on 16 June led authorities to realize that the violence in Malaya was spreading beyond their control.<sup>13</sup> The following day, the high commissioner declared a state of emergency across the federation. Emergency regulations were quickly put into place that permitted searches of persons or premises without warrants, authorized

the detention of anyone suspected of involvement in the insurgency, and provided the death penalty for unauthorized possession of a firearm.<sup>14</sup>

A long history of colonial policing led the British to develop the view that, in the initial response to a crisis, the military should act in support of and at the direction of the civil power. The British would resort to martial law only if the civil authority proved wholly incapable of action. This approach suited the British Army, which opposed the idea that its soldiers should act as police officers in the colonies. In the Army's view, the police, with their knowledge of local customs and languages, were better equipped to control civilians.

This last assumption proved to be faulty in the case of Malaya because the police were overwhelmingly ethnic Malay while the Communists and their guerrilla cadres were overwhelmingly ethnic Chinese. The lack of Chinese policemen and Chinese-speaking officers hampered police work as the Communists drew support almost entirely from 500,000 Chinese squatters who lived as rubber tappers along the jungle fringes.<sup>15</sup>

Appointing an experienced senior police officer was the first step in reinforcing the civil authority's ability to direct counterinsurgency efforts. In August 1948, the federation government named W.N. Gray the commissioner of police. Gray, who previously had served in Palestine where he had firsthand experience with terrorism and guerrilla warfare, had two primary duties as commissioner—to oversee a ten-fold expansion of the police force and to take the lead in the federation's counterinsurgency effort.<sup>16</sup> The government did not provide Gray with any additional executive authority for the latter task beyond that which his office traditionally held. As a result, Gray was simply one of many senior federation officials involved in the counterinsurgency effort, rather than a true guiding force. The daunting task of expanding the police force further undercut Gray's ability to provide guidance. The commissioner and his small staff had a full-time job on their hands recruiting and training 90,000 new police and auxiliaries. At the state and district levels, the situation was much the same: the existing police force was preoccupied with regular policing duties and had little time for planning counterinsurgency strategies.



Imperial War Museum, DM176

A Malay special constable stands guard at a sentry post at the entrance to a rubber plantation, 1949.



Once the new police commissioner was in place, the federation's senior civil servant, Chief Secretary M.V. del Tufo, was selected to oversee all Emergency operations. Although he was a veteran of the Malayan Civil Service, del Tufo had no experience working in the districts, and many considered him an administrator of dubious quality.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, he was a staff officer and did not have the authority to give direct orders to the police or the military. This resulted in a division of authority whereby Commissioner of Police Gray handled police-military aspects of the Emergency and Chief Secretary del Tufo handled all other issues.

The divided command structure, combined with Gray and del Tufo's heavy administrative burdens, prevented the two men from providing real leadership to counterinsurgency efforts. In their place, the commander-in-chief for Far Eastern Land Forces and the general officer commanding, Malaya, the senior military officers in Malaya, took the lead in operational planning for the counterinsurgency while attempting to appear as though they were playing only supporting roles to the civil authorities.<sup>18</sup>

Emergency operations at the state and district levels suffered from the same dysfunctional command and control that the federal level did. Nevertheless, the initial response to the outbreak of violence was positive: within two months, all nine Malay states had established joint police-military intelligence committees to coordinate information on the insurgents. However, the police had difficulty contributing to the joint effort. Across Malaya, the police lacked the training and ability to acquire the intimate local knowledge required to combat subversion. Most police officers functioned as little more than paramilitary guards.<sup>19</sup> Fighting subversive propaganda, sabotage, and armed terrorism was primarily a police task, but the responsibility fell to the military simply because it had the capacity to act where the civil administration did not.

Coordination of the counterinsurgency effort proceeded in this way for nearly two years. The Army dispersed several large guerrilla units and forced them to take refuge in the jungles on the edges of the squatter areas, but the civil authorities and police did not provide the leadership required to defeat the insurgency. Without action by the civilian authorities, military means alone could not achieve victory over the Communist terrorists.

Insurgent attacks took a continual toll on the Malayan populace. In 1948, the MRLA killed or wounded 886 civilians and security force personnel. After a brief respite, the MRLA increased the tempo of its operations, causing an additional 1,161 casualties in 1950. The British Government's decision to recognize the Communist regime of Mao Tse-tung in January 1950 contributed to the perception in Malaya that the British were losing their struggle against the Communists.<sup>20</sup>

By that time, it was clear that a restructuring of the government's command and control system was necessary. The local representatives of the British Defense Staff suggested that a single civilian coordinator report directly to the high commissioner and be given the task of prosecuting the counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>21</sup>

## **General Briggs, 1950-1951**

The federation government belatedly recognized that the burden of overseeing the police force's expansion was keeping Police Commissioner Gray from providing guidance to the security forces; it therefore requested Britain select a qualified candidate to become "Director of Anti-Bandit Operations," also known as the director of operations, or simply "the DO." To maintain the tradition of civilian supremacy, the British Government selected a retired Army officer, Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs, for the post. In addition to his considerable administrative experience, Briggs had commanded units fighting against Communist guerrillas in Burma in the late 1940s.

As the DO, Briggs could coordinate the actions of the police and the armed forces, although he did not have formal control over them. Within the federation, Briggs held a rank equal to that of Chief Secretary del Tufo, but he had to go through del Tufo to get access to the high commissioner.

Briggs' plan to defeat the MRLA was to put them on the defensive by seizing the initiative.<sup>22</sup> The first step was to deny the insurgents access to food and support. To accomplish this, the Chinese squatters living on the fringes of the jungle, the primary source of food for the MRLA cadres in the area, were resettled into well-defended villages. The insurgents were further harried by the deployment of Army "striking forces" that moved systematically state by state across the country from south to



north scattering the guerrilla bands and insurgents. These forces would patrol aggressively and lay ambushes across jungle tracks within a five-hour radius of a known MRLA unit's area of operations. Denied easy access to food, the insurgents had to choose between fighting government forces to acquire enough provisions to sustain themselves and breaking into smaller units that were less effective militarily. As it cleared areas, the government built up state administrative and police networks so that, when the striking forces moved on, the Communists would not be able to re-infiltrate the areas successfully.

Recognizing that successful implementation of this strategy required efficient civil-military cooperation, Briggs focused his attention on the federation, state, and district coordination committees organized in the early days of the Emergency. He standardized their structure, ensuring that every level of government had such a committee and that the committees included representatives of the civil authorities, the armed forces, and the police. Briggs transformed the committees from coordinating committees to "war executive committees" charged with the responsibility for conducting counterinsurgency operations in their areas of responsibility.

To coordinate matters at the federation level, a Federal War Council was created in April 1950. In addition to Briggs and the high commissioner, the council included the general officer commanding, Malaya; the air officer commanding, Malaya; the chief secretary; the secretary of defense; and the commissioner of police. Under the direction of the high commissioner, the council formulated Emergency policy and allocated resources.<sup>23</sup> Creating a single executive body that included the heads of all agencies involved in responding to the Emergency streamlined the decision-making process and improved interagency information sharing. Significantly, the Federal War Council could make funds available to state- and district-level entities without having to gain item-by-item approval from the federation's Legislative Council.<sup>24</sup>

The state and district war executive committees (SWECs and DWECs respectively) were subordinate to the council and had the power to give orders to the local civil authority, police, and armed forces. The SWECs' and DWECs' core membership consisted of the senior civil servant, senior soldier, and

senior police officer in the area. Technical experts and representatives of key community groups attended committee meetings as needed.<sup>25</sup> Through this mechanism, stove piping, the traditional bane of interagency operations, was overcome, and the coordination of all relevant government agencies with the security forces was achieved at all levels through a single command structure.

Sixty DWECs were created across Malaya. They were small and structured for quick reaction and decision making. In addition to their core membership, intelligence officers, police officials from adjacent districts, and prominent local citizens attended their meetings. Because the insurgents' Achilles' heel was their need for contact with the local population, the district level became the "tip of the spear" of the government's counterinsurgency effort. Under the Emergency regulations, DWECs had extensive authority in their districts: they could order police and military operations, set curfews, resettle squatters, control the distribution of food supplies, and so forth. The inclusion of civilian, police, and military leaders in the DWECs allowed the civil authorities and the security forces to work hand in hand. Local officials could persuade the military not to conduct operations likely to prove more damaging to the civilian population than to the MRLA, and the military could make civil authorities aware of the unnecessary constraints local regulations placed on their freedom of operation.<sup>26</sup> The high degree of flexibility combined with executive authority imparted to the DWECs allowed each DWEC to tailor counterinsurgency operations to the unique local conditions and circumstances.

While the DWECs focused their attention on day-to-day issues in their areas of operations, the SWECs took the strategic view. The state's menteri besar, who acted in the name of the local ruler, presided over each SWEC, while the state's British advisor, who attended all meetings but had no executive powers, assisted him. The representative of the Malayan Civil Service filled the role of SWEC executive secretary, ensuring that decisions for action were recorded and disseminated. Empowered to make decisions, the SWEC could coordinate local efforts and act without waiting to consult with the government in Kuala Lumpur. If the state had a security concern, the local heads of

the police and the army were on the committee. If the state's Chinese community had issues of concern, the menteri besar became aware of it. If the state required focused propaganda messages to appeal to the local population, the state's information officer could respond.<sup>27</sup>

The heart of each War Executive Committee was its Joint Operations Room (JOR), in which police, navy, air force, and army personnel coordinated emergency operations and received, analyzed, and disseminated raw intelligence.<sup>28</sup> The Malayan Police's Special Branch supplied intelligence to the analysts in the JOR, and information from military patrols and interviews with private citizens supplemented that intelligence. The processing of intelligence was nonstop. At least one intelligence officer was on duty in the room 24 hours a day. Every morning, the War Executive Committee's core members would meet in the operations room for what they called "morning prayers." The intelligence officer on duty would report what had happened during the previous 24 hours, ensuring that the committee maintained an accurate picture of the current situation in its area of responsibility. The JOR was a key vehicle for daily coordination between the military, the police, and the civil administration.

Despite the host of reforms, positive results were not immediately apparent after the government implemented Briggs' plan. To the great frustration of ministers in London, the number of guerrilla incidents actually increased during the early part of Briggs' tenure. By early 1951, however, results began to be evident on the battlefield: the average number of contacts with guerrilla bands per month rose, as did the number of guerrillas who surrendered or were killed, while the number of terrorist attacks began to decline.

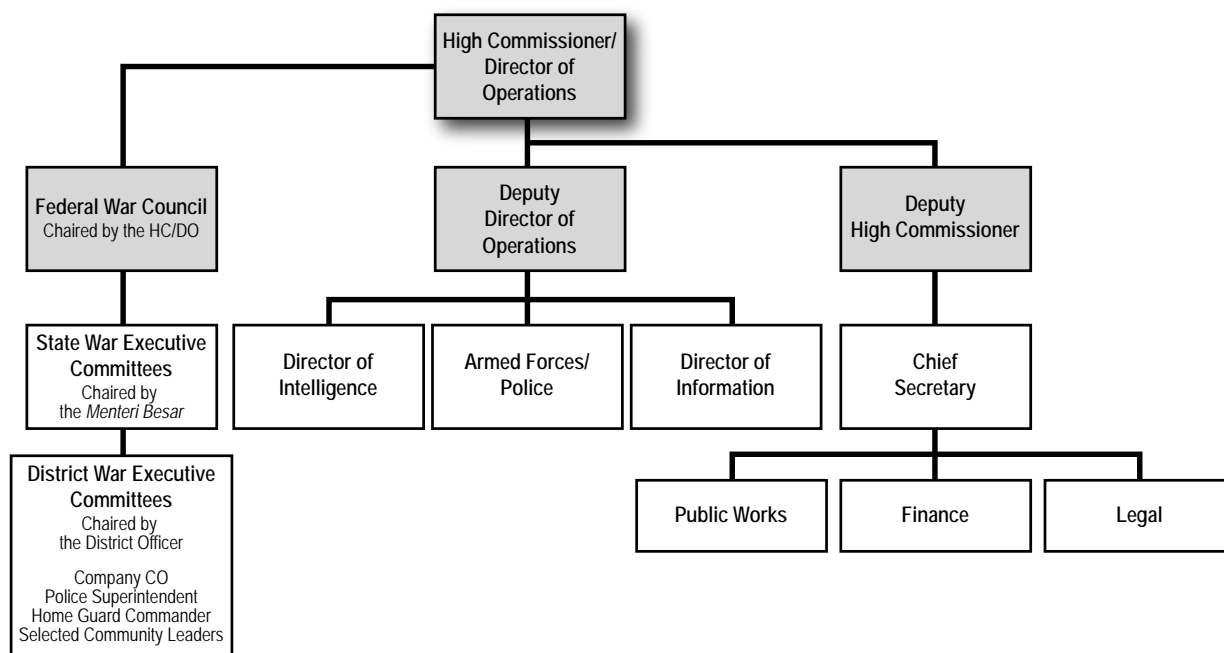
These successes did not obscure the fact that Briggs' reforms were insufficient to achieve a truly unified effort. As one British official noted, three years into the insurgency "neither Kuala Lumpur's writ nor even that of the D.O. runs smoothly or swiftly in the States. On one hand the central machine takes too long to answer queries from regions or to permit initiative; or on the other, local State Governments have natural but obstructive antipathy to the centre."<sup>29</sup> Despite reforms intended to enhance decision making and flexibility, the

fundamental problem remained that "no important decision could be carried out until it had been ratified by eleven state and settlement governments, the federal government, and the government of Great Britain—thirteen in all. The military director of operations had limited authority and was hampered by the civil officials. They had a 'business-as-usual' tendency to carry on their normal work as if the revolt did not exist, and only assist the director of operations so far as they feel disposed to."<sup>30</sup>

As Briggs approached the end of his 18 months in Malaya, he strongly felt that his lack of command authority hindered his ability to get the Federation's police authorities to make the policy and organizational changes he deemed necessary. More than one historian has noted that "the executive impotence of this arrangement retarded the real effectiveness of his office."<sup>31</sup> Briggs was also frustrated by the fact that, as director of operations, he was number two in the government yet still had to refer decisions for the high commissioner through the civilian chief secretary. After Briggs' departure, an editorial in the *Straits Times* summed up the situation: "The original trouble was that there was no director of operations, and even no conception of the strength of the Communist challenge. It was a long time before there was effective cooperation between the police and the military and a longer time still before the government could bring itself to appoint a director of operations. When General Briggs came out, there was a reason to believe that the war at last would be fought as it should be fought. Yet when General Briggs left Malaya, just over a month ago, he revealed that he too never had the authority he needed."<sup>32</sup>

## **Templer Takes Charge, 1952-1953**

In October 1951, two events occurred that would change the future of the counterinsurgency effort in Malaya. On 6 October, the MRLA ambushed and killed High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney while he was driving to a resort north of Kuala Lumpur. Gurney's murder shocked Malaya and made it clear that further measures were required to defeat the insurgents. Twenty days later, Winston Churchill became prime minister of Great Britain for the second time. Churchill strongly believed that a divided government had been responsible for the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in 1942 and was sympathetic to arguments



**Figure 1. Malayan Counterinsurgency Organization as of December 1951.**<sup>33</sup>

that the director of operations required command authority. With Gurney's death and Briggs' departure, the government needed to fill both the positions of high commissioner and DO.

In December 1951, acting on the colonial secretary's recommendation, Churchill's cabinet merged the posts of high commissioner and director of operations, thereby unifying control of civil and military forces. London believed the new post required a man who had "the courage to issue the necessary orders, the drive to insist that those orders are carried out, and the determination and will-power to see the thing through to the end."<sup>34</sup> The man London chose for the job was Sir Gerald Templer, a former vice chief of the Imperial General Staff, a past director of military intelligence, and Britain's youngest general during World War II. Templer was known as "a man of action and a soldier-administrator of the highest quality."<sup>35</sup> To free Templer from the "paper jungle" that his combined civil and military responsibilities would create, London created the posts of deputy high commissioner (civilian) and deputy director of operations (military) so that he could "turn his attention to the real jungle and its menace."

Templer believed the government should focus all its efforts on the counterinsurgency. Soon after arriving in country, he made this view known in a

widely distributed memorandum: "Any idea that the business of normal civil government and the business of the Emergency are two separate entities must be killed for good and all. . . . The two activities are completely and utterly interrelated."<sup>36</sup> To underscore this point, Templer merged the high commissioner's cabinet, the Federal Executive Council, with the Federal War Council.

Aside from this organizational change, Templer's primary contribution to the conduct of the Emergency was his leadership and drive. Armed with powers denied to his predecessor, Templer implemented the Briggs plan aggressively. Leaving the day-to-day management of issues at the federation level to his assistants, he was constantly in the field.<sup>37</sup>

Templer believed, as did Briggs before him, that the struggle with the Communists was primarily a political one, and he made a lasting addition to the counterinsurgency lexicon when he declared that "the answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but *in the hearts and minds of the people*."<sup>38</sup>

Templer's tenure was the turning point for the counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya. Between 1952 and 1954, two-thirds of the MRLA were killed or captured, and Communist attacks declined from an average of 500 a month in 1951 to less than 90 a month by 1954. During the same period, security



force casualties, which had averaged nearly 100 a month in 1951, were down to 20 a month by 1954.<sup>39</sup> Relentless jungle patrols and the resettlement program severed the links between armed MRLA units and their Min Yuen supporters.

## Handover, 1954-1957

By the middle of 1954, the Emergency's outcome was no longer in doubt. The MRLA was defeated, although a lengthy mopping-up stage remained. Having completed his tour of duty, Templer returned to England to become the chief of staff of the British Army. His tenure as joint high commissioner and director of operations proved to be unique. London reestablished traditional civilian control of the military by appointing Templer's civilian deputy, D.C. MacGillivray, to succeed him as high commissioner. Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Bourne became director of operations. (The position was once again subordinate to the position of high commissioner.)

In keeping with the counterinsurgency's political strategy, British authorities made it clear that Malaya would eventually become an independent nation. To facilitate the transition, Bourne expanded the membership of the SWECS and DWECs by including local political figures and prominent civilians. This helped expose Malaya's indigenous leaders to the types of challenges they would face after independence and associated them with the British-led counterinsurgency effort. The goal of this latter action was to cause key political leaders to identify with and internalize the "distasteful measures" required in the battle against the MRLA and to persevere until the guerrillas disbanded or fled.<sup>40</sup>

When the Federation of Malaya became independent on 31 August 1957, the process of Malayanization had proceeded to the point where all SWECS and DWECs had Malayan chairmen. Tunku Abdul Rahman, minister for internal defense and security (and later prime minister), became responsible for the overall conduct of Emergency operations. The DO answered to Rahman but retained operational command of all security forces.

Most senior army and police officers were still British, but they were servants of the government of Malaya. This was an important step in bolstering the government's legitimacy and undercutting the Communists' ability to attract nationalists to their cause. The British willingness to subordinate

their officers to the Malayan Government after independence illustrates an important principle of assistance to counterinsurgency: when an outside power supports a host nation against an insurgency, it is critical that the host government should appear to be in charge, with the ally in a supporting role. As counterinsurgency practitioner Frank Kitson notes, "If there is the slightest indication of the ally taking the lead, the insurgents will have the opportunity to say that the government has betrayed the people to an outside power, and that they, the insurgents, are the only true representatives of the nation."<sup>41</sup>

The Malayan Emergency dragged on for three more years, as the last remnants of the MRLA were scattered and eventually driven across the border into Thailand. On 31 July 1960, the Malayan Government declared that the Emergency was over. Despite its successful outcome, the Malayan Emergency extracted a toll in time, blood, and treasure.



Imperial War Museum, MAL40

**Men of the Malay Regiment during a jungle patrol in the Temenggor area of northern Malaya, 1953.**

From its initial declaration, the Emergency lasted slightly more than 12 years. Government security forces suffered an estimated 4,436 killed, wounded, or injured, and there were an additional 4,668 civilian casualties. MRLA casualties are reported to have been 13,191. Another 2,980 surrendered to the government. The total cost of prosecuting this conflict in today's terms was nearly \$3.3 billion.<sup>42</sup>

## Malaya and Current Doctrine

As Sir Robert Thompson observed, the most important element of a counterinsurgency campaign is the government and security force control-and-coordination structure. The need to synchronize interagency and host-nation efforts presents challenges beyond those of a traditional command. Achieving unity of effort can be very difficult, because it requires the integration of both civil and military elements of state power to achieve what are primarily political objectives. The executive committee system the British employed in Malaya represents one model of how to integrate these elements of national power into a unified effort. The salient feature of this approach was the establishment of executive committees at the federal and sub-federal levels that brought together the civil administration, the security forces, and the intelligence-gathering organizations. Although high-level policy direction became increasingly centralized at the federal level, responsibility for its execution devolved to officials at the state and district levels who worked in highly flexible committees that could adapt to local circumstances. In the case of Malaya, maximum effectiveness was achieved when a single individual, Sir Gerald Templer, was empowered to coordinate all aspects of the counterinsurgency campaign. This model served the British well, and they replicated it in later counterinsurgency campaigns in Kenya and Cyprus.

FM 3-24 suggests that the creation of civil-military operations centers (CMOCs) at each subordinate political level of the host-nation government can be an effective coordination mechanism when U.S. and multinational forces provide counterinsurgency support to a foreign country. "The CMOC coordinates the interaction of U.S. and multinational military forces with a wide variety of civilian agencies" such as governmental, nongovernmental,

and international organizations, and third-nation agencies and authorities.<sup>43</sup>

Although the executive committee system the British employed in Malaya shares a number of similarities with the CMOC, there is an important distinction: the SWECs and DWECs were executive bodies designed to act as well as to coordinate. Under existing doctrine, "the CMOC is not designed as, nor should it be used as, a [command and control] element."<sup>44</sup>

However, the counterinsurgency experience in Malaya indicates that joint or even combined committees that only coordinate action may prove inadequate for the task, since seizing and maintaining the operational initiative from insurgents requires executive bodies that can take action and force their opponents to go on the defense.

FM 3-24 does incorporate some of the lessons of Templer's success in Malaya. Regarding U.S. efforts to support counterinsurgency, it states: "Command and control of all U.S. Government organizations engaged in a COIN mission should be exercised by a single leader through a formal command and control system."<sup>45</sup> The purpose of this action is to produce a unified goal and direction for American efforts. Unfortunately, the FM provides only an outline as to how a host nation should structure its counterinsurgency effort and how U.S. assistance efforts can be integrated into that structure. Helping develop such a structure can be a significant challenge for those assigned to advise a foreign counterinsurgency. For example, during much of the Vietnam War, "neither the Americans nor the Vietnamese had bodies capable of coordinating all aspects of their own war efforts, so every different type of aid had to be negotiated between the head of the relevant U.S. agency with his Vietnamese opposite number. More important still was the fact that no supreme council existed for the overall prosecution of the war on which the Americans could be represented."<sup>46</sup> No amount of aid or advice will achieve the desired result if the host nation does not implement an effective civil-military structure to coordinate its counterinsurgency efforts.

Though not applicable at all times and in all places, the committee structures employed during the Malayan Emergency provide one model for managing counterinsurgency. A country beset by an insurgency will probably not possess an effective

governmental coordination system at the outbreak of violence. If it did, it almost certainly would have detected subversive groups in the country and defeated them before they gained sufficient strength to initiate armed violence. The benefit of studying historical cases is that we can draw lessons from the experience of others. The British

required four years of trial and error to arrive at a command and coordination system that allowed them to implement a unified counterinsurgency plan. Their success can serve as a guide to others facing the challenge of coordinating the disparate elements of national power to mount an effective counterinsurgency campaign. **MR**

## NOTES

All official British documents cited in this paper are from the Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, United Kingdom. This source is abbreviated PRO in the following citations.

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2. Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2006), 2-1.
3. Ibid., 2-4.
4. As the Emergency progressed, the British received military support and forces from Australia, New Zealand, and Rhodesia, making the Malayan Emergency a true multinational counterinsurgency effort.
5. Oliver Lyttelton, "Malaya," 21 December 1951, Cabinet Minutes and Papers (CAB) 129/48, C(51)59, PRO. On the topic of attitudes towards Chinese citizenship, Field Marshal Slim noted "... a number of the prewar British Malayan civil and police officers are, I think, still obsessed with the idea that Malaya is a country for Malaysians only." Field Marshal Sir William Slim, "Note on Tour of South-East Asia," November 1949, Records of the Colonial Office (CO) 537/4374, no. 5, PRO.
6. Crech Jones, "The Situation in Malaya," 1 July 1948, CAB 129/28, CP(48)171, PRO.
7. Margaret Shennan, *Out in the Midday Sun: The British in Malaya 1880-1960* (London: John Murray, 2000), 241.
8. Griffiths, "Political and Economic Background to the Situation in Malaya," 15 November 1950, Records of the Prime Minister's Office (PREM) 8/1406/2, DO(50)94, PRO.
9. For one account of the variety of responsibilities a district officer could have, see John Morley, *Colonial Postscript: The Diary of a District Officer*, (London: Radcliffe Press, 1991).
10. Throughout the Emergency, the government referred to the insurgents by a variety of names. At first, it simply called them "bandits," hence General Briggs' title of Director of Anti-Bandit Operations. Later, it referred to them as Communist terrorists or CTs. For the purposes of this article, I will refer to the Communist insurgents by their self-appointed title of the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) or simply as "the Communists."
11. For MRLA strength, see Ian F. W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (London: Routledge, 2001), 98; for support network figures, see "Malayan Communist Party: 1948-1960," *Britain's Small Wars*, <www.britains-smallwars.com/malaya/mcp.html>.
12. John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency from Palestine to Northern Ireland* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 43.
13. Jones, CAB 129/28, CP(48)171.
14. Sir E. Gent, Telegram to Crech Jones, "Declaration of Emergency," 17 June 1948, CO 717/167/52849/2/1948, f 302, PRO.
15. Out of a police force of 10,000, there were an estimated 24 Chinese officers and 204 rank and file. Report of the Police Mission to Malaya, March 1950, Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1950, CO 537/5417, PRO. Documents captured by British forces in November 1949 confirmed that armed MCP cadres depended on "the support of rural workers" (Chinese squatters) for food and basic supplies. In general, the MCP claimed support from the "Chinese rural population" and some support from Chinese and Indian workers in large-scale plantations and mines. However, the MCP made little progress in penetrating the city populations. The Malayan emergency was "essentially a revolt of under administered rural areas." See "Comment on Captured MCP Document The Present Day Situation and Duties of the Malayan Communist Party," 12 May 1950, PREM 8/1406/2, MAL C(50)12, PRO.
16. Special constables supplemented regular police and part-time auxiliary police that numbered over 100,000 by the end of 1951. Lyttelton, CAB 129/48, C(51)59.
17. In a damning assessment, Field Marshal Montgomery says of del Tufo, "He has no power of command and gives out no inspiration. He is, of course, quite useless as Chief Secretary." Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, "Success in Malaya," enclosure

contained in Montgomery, Letter to Winston Churchill, "Appointment of Templer," 4 January 1952, PREM 11/169, PRO.

18. J.B. Robinson, *Transformation in Malaya* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1956), 149.
19. Lyttelton, CAB 129/48, C(51)59.
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30. Lennox A. Mills, *Malaya: A Political and Economic Appraisal* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 60-61.
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33. Chart derived from Henniker, 62, and Joel E. Hamby, "Civil-Military Operations: Joint Doctrine and the Malayan Emergency," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Autumn 2002): 56.
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35. "Gen Templer: I am eager to have a go," *The Straits Times*, 17 January 1952.
36. Cited in Noel Barber, *The War of the Running Dogs* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), 150.
37. For example, see Henniker, 81-92.
38. Shennan, 321.
39. Statistics issued by the Psychological Warfare Section, Ministry of Home Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, as reported in Sarkesian, 72.
40. Lyttelton, CAB 129/48, C(51)59.
41. Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peacekeeping* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), 57.
42. Figures drawn from Beckett, 103. Cost of campaign in 2005 dollars was calculated using the inflation calculator at <www.westegg.com/inflation/>.
43. *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 2-13.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., 2-2.
46. Kitson, 58. This is one of the significant problems that CORDS intended to solve.

## Acknowledgements

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# Army IO is PSYOP

## Influencing More with Less

Colonel Curtis D. Boyd, U.S. Army

THE PURPOSE OF this article is to briefly examine some of the root causes of the ongoing fracture of Army information operations (IO) in general and the dysfunctional friction between IO and the various Army agents of influence, in particular psychological operations (PSYOP) and public affairs (PA). The article will provide an overview of Army PSYOP today and possible constructs for tomorrow, suggest steps to mitigate friction or fracture between the sub-elements of IO to assure a greater unity of effort, and recommend the development of a strategic communication framework built on media and broadcast expertise secured by a culturally attuned and regionally aware cadre of professionals.

In both war and peace, success in the battle for hearts and minds hinges primarily on one side's ability to operate comfortably in the other side's human terrain. In such an emotionally charged, competitive communication environment, the ability to affect the psychological and informational battlespace of the adversary and the local population depends on the credibility of both the message and the messenger. Historically, the Army's PSYOP branch has been the U.S. military's principal foreign communications agent of influence. Using words and symbols, Army PSYOP has coordinated and executed influential actions and information programs specifically aimed at affecting foreign perceptions, behavior, and thought processes for over half a century. As a result, Army PSYOP as an institution has long consisted of a career force specially trained and equipped to formulate and conduct operations to inform and influence while using ideas and images to shape an adversary's attitudes and perceptions.

PSYOP has subscribed to the rule that words alone are not the only motivator of changes in perception, attitude, or behavior. Moreover, psychological operations are coordinated to synchronize with the influence potential of kinetic actions or the intended effects of the more deliberate and obvious military activities.

Apart from PSYOP, the U.S. military has, over time, developed an array of agents of influence with (non-kinetic) niche capabilities that also shape the perception and decision making of foreign neutral, friendly, and adversarial target audiences. These agents include specialists in deception operations, computer network operations (CNO), operations security (OPSEC), and

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PHOTO: SSG Rodney Taiclet, with 346th Psychological Operations Battalion, passes out newspapers around a local market during a patrol in Tikrit, Iraq, 11 June 2003. (U.S. Army, SGT Albert Eaddy)

electronic warfare (EW), as well as other related activities, to include civil affairs (or civil-military operations), and PA.

In the 1990s, the Army introduced a new functional specialty: IO. Ostensibly, the IO career field was created to better organize and integrate the aforementioned disparate agents of influence, which were widely perceived to be operating more or less independently and without sufficient integration and synchronization into an overall operational planning and execution scheme. Regardless of good intentions, IO has struggled to establish a legitimate presence in the Army and is still in the process of defining its mission and role within the context of planning, organizing, and conducting coordinated military information operations. Additionally, during this difficult developmental period, IO has generated a great deal of friction between itself and the various agents of influence, which have well-established, clearly defined, and fully integrated roles in force protection, information management, public communications, and so-called influence operations.<sup>1</sup>

## **Distinguishing between IO and PSYOP Roles**

Army IO doctrine (as defined by the Combined Arms Center [CAC], Fort Leavenworth, which is currently rewriting it) and joint doctrine describe IO as the integrated employment of the core capabilities of EW, CNO, PSYOP, military deception, and OPSEC in concert with other specified supporting and related activities (such as civil affairs, PA, Combat Camera, and, when appropriate, combat operations).<sup>2</sup> The collective purpose of IO synchronization is to inform, influence, deter, degrade, deny, or disrupt adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.<sup>3</sup> Under the current paradigm, PSYOP is a sub-element of IO on a par with the other sub-elements noted above. Under the Army IO doctrine rewrite, CAC proposes to re-assimilate four sub-elements of IO into the core staff (deception to G3, operations; EW to fires; CNO to G2, intelligence, and G6, information management; OPSEC to G2), leaving PSYOP and the related activity PA (with Combat Camera) as the only sub-element(s) to be coordinated and integrated by the IO staff officer.

The apparent intent of the new IO construct is to redefine Army IO not as a collection of actual

operational capabilities (as in joint IO doctrine), but as a “niche-knowledgeable” staff integrator responsible for reconciling only the differences between PSYOP and PA targets of information or influence. Unfortunately, with this move the Army has accidentally created unnecessary and potentially dysfunctional overhead at the coordinating staff level. The Army IO staff officer might only plan, organize, and direct how PSYOP will create psychological effects against an enemy or targeted foreign population—tasks which were formerly done by the PSYOP staff officer or supporting tactical PSYOP unit. Likewise, the Army IO staff officer will coordinate PA activities, both foreign and domestic—here again an assignment Army PA officers and NCOs have been performing without issue until now.

The proposed changes to Army IO doctrine would eliminate any hope of maintaining a clear distinction between IO and PSYOP (and now possibly PA). Army IO will become a simple, single-niche integration activity of only one agent of influence—PSYOP. Fundamentally, Army IO will become an extension of PSYOP and possibly PA. While PA (like civil affairs) is doctrinally considered an IO-related activity, PA has serious concerns about associating itself directly with IO. Operational and policy restrictions complicate PA integration by IO staff officers, most of whom lack the bona fides to perform PA-specialized tasks and functions. Additionally, the association of PA with activities known to employ deception or use selective information or images to influence perceptions (i.e., PSYOP) is generally forbidden. In the event that the association between PA and IO becomes common knowledge, PA will risk damaging the integrity, truthfulness, and credibility of the sources and content of its messages. For years, long before the advent of IO, the integrity of the PA message was protected by

***The proposed changes to Army IO doctrine would eliminate any hope of maintaining a clear distinction between IO and PSYOP (and now possibly PA).***

unofficial coordination between PA and PSYOP professionals without incident or ill intent. So where or what is Army IO's niche, regardless of doctrinal change? And is it smart to dismantle the current Army IO doctrinal model when military operations are becoming more joint and full-spectrum?

Potentially, IO could ensure more potent and precise use of the elements of information operations in support of PSYOP themes and objectives. Army IO might also serve as a functional area or the next step in a more sophisticated and coherent Army career-force approach for former PSYOP and PA staff officers. Moreover, IO could be categorized as a military operation (like urban operations, MOUT) planned, synchronized, and directed by the PSYOP branch officer. In the end, CAC's proposed doctrinal concept has oversimplified IO to such an extent that IO is de facto or fundamentally PSYOP, at least at the tactical level. While our warfighters at corps and below require a greater ability to inform and influence audiences in their areas of operations than they do the means to degrade adversary communications or computer networks, Army IO still requires an ability to remain fully capable and interoperable in a joint, interagency, or multinational construct.

## The Roots of Confusion between IO and PSYOP

Confusion over the IO coordination scheme is not just a product of the current doctrinal oversimplification of Army IO at CAC; it is likely symptomatic of self-defeating PSYOP tendencies as well. Unfortunately, in the current sociopolitical environment, "PSYOP" has devolved into a pejorative term both inside and outside our military. This is evident in the careful avoidance of its use by senior military and defense officials when publicly discussing activities aimed at influencing or informing enemies or foreign audiences. IO has been widely adopted as a euphemism for PSYOP. Consequently, the term "IO" is now commonly and erroneously used to discuss activities that are, by doctrine, PSYOP. For example, unified combatant command theater



U.S. Army SSG Bruce Johnson, left, and SGT Tyler Wheaton use digital recorders near Baghdad, Iraq, 24 January 2007, to broadcast a message to residents on how to cooperate during a cordon and search operation.

DOD, 2nd Class Kitt Ananthram, U.S. Navy

security cooperation plans now routinely use IO synonymously for PSYOP to describe regional security information programs, activities, and exercises with other nations, thereby wrongfully categorizing what should be PSYOP capabilities, themes, messages, and actions in the theater plans as IO.

The practice of mistakenly describing PSYOP activities as IO now permeates the Army's institutional lexicon. So thoroughly inculcated is this misuse of terms that it is now common to hear the military's most prominent leaders, including most flag officers, senior Pentagon officials, and others, routinely and improperly use IO and PSYOP interchangeably. For example, retired Major General David Grange, former commander of the 1st Infantry Division, has written that in Bosnia he used IO and PSYOP interchangeably.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in his recent book *Plan of Attack*, Bob Woodward points out how then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld referred repeatedly to PSYOP as IO while describing leaflet drops and Commando Solo broadcasts as IO preparation weapons against Saddam and his cronies.<sup>5</sup> In another example, Nathaniel Fick, author of *One Bullet Away*, the story of his experiences as a Marine platoon leader in Iraq, stated that as he and his recon platoon crossed into the southern portion of the country, 9 out of 10 Iraqis surrendered without fighting, which he contends was the result of an "intense IO campaign that dropped leaflets and broadcasted surrender appeals from HMMWV-mounted loudspeakers."<sup>6</sup>



Such misuse of terms is prevalent in the IO community itself. For example, in an article published by 1st IO Command, the author argues that everything the Army does that fails to fit neatly or categorically elsewhere—which of course includes PSYOP—is information operations.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, this misuse of terminology masks the fact that IO planners cannot actually do PSYOP—they have neither the training, nor the operational experience, nor the authorities, nor the organic capability. If IO staff officers want to plan employment of PSYOP capabilities for an operation, they must requisition the services of personnel assigned to one of the Army's three PSYOP groups. How then can PSYOP continue to be referred to as IO?

In contrast, a case could be made that the Army's PSYOP branch, which possesses organized units from team to brigade composed of branch officers, NCOs, and junior enlisted specialists with appropriate equipment, linguistic ability, regional expertise, and experience in the art and science of foreign influence could easily and readily assume most, if not all, of the so-called IO coordinating functions. As a sub-element of the traditional C3/J3/G3, the PSYOP officer and/or NCO could logically assume the principal duty of staff coordinator for the other elements of IO tasked with achieving a desired influential effect using the other elements of IO to informational and psychological advantage. We would spare ourselves the involvement of another intermediate staff element—in this case, one with minimal practical experience, specialized training, education, and understanding of the influence mission—that degrades the speed and accuracy required to deliver a timely and relevant message to a foreign target audience.

In any case, the unfortunate consequence of using PSYOP and IO interchangeably is confusion about the proper role of each specialty. The near-universal misinterpretation that IO is PSYOP has also had the unfortunate tendency to raise expectations among commanders about the capability IO practitioners (i.e., staff officers) can actually deliver. For supported commanders and their staffs who envision the robust operational capabilities described by their newly anointed IO staffers, IO's inability to deliver credible and timely messages to audiences in the supported commander's area of responsibility has perpetuated frustration and disappointment.

To mitigate such perceptions, PSYOP and IO must form a single, unified capability to maximize the Army's potential to speak with one voice. The status quo cannot prevail, for in the near term, PSYOP and IO tensions will not be reconciled, nor will the potential for PSYOP, PA, or strategic communication coordination be maximized. It is inevitable that under the current construct, the Army might begin to view IO as duplicative, an unnecessary redundancy that increases neither the speed nor the accuracy of our military message. Moreover, an additional tactical staff coordinator adds little value to PSYOP, PA, or the other IO tools and techniques that might add potency and precision to the psychological-influence message or method.

Efforts to raise concerns about the operational utility of IO (i.e., questioning what value another layer of staff supervision and management actually adds) have not been well received. Somehow, all seem content to potentially establish another staff layer in an already robust "transformational" headquarters—despite PSYOP/IO comparisons and analyses of staff actions and critical tasks that clearly point to redundancies and inefficiencies. A strong contributing factor to the apparent intransigence is the fact that PSYOP expertise is not well represented at Headquarters, Department of the Army. Additionally, there is an ongoing shortage of company-grade PSYOP officers at the tactical and institutional levels. (The combined active and reserve force fill for captains is less than 30 percent.) The result has been misrepresentation and a lack of understanding about a capability critical to our Army today and in the future. A strong case can be made to reexamine the number of authorizations for IO and PSYOP staff officers and NCOs across our Army to fully appreciate the redundancies and inefficiencies of two career forces competing for similar assignments and performing many of the same functions (e.g., at what level do we need a specialist in PSYOP or a generalist in IO?).

Given its limited resources, PSYOP actually can and does do a lot. PSYOP assets habitually task-organize to give commanders the maximum capability possible in terms of media-development skills, analytical talent, foreign language expertise, cultural knowledge, linguistic skills, marketing techniques, and broadcast means. These capabilities can serve as the core component of an Army IO career force and

an information campaign to introduce U.S. ideas and images into the hearts and minds of foreign enemy, friendly, and neutral audiences.

Currently, such is the general satisfaction with PSYOP performance and contributions to the War on Terrorism that, despite known limitations, PSYOP has become DOD's recognized single-source "one-stop-shop" for analysis, media development, production, and dissemination of tactical and operational-level information intended to engage, inform, and influence foreign audiences.<sup>8</sup> Lessons learned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan repeatedly echo the need for more PSYOP forces, as well as a greater ability to culturally and linguistically influence the local populace with ideas, images, and information consistent with U.S. political and military goals and objectives.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Defense Science Board studies (2000, 2001, 2004, 2005), PSYOP master plans (1985, 1990), and a National Defense University study (2004) mirror the same point: we lack sufficient force, capabilities, and authorities to inform and influence to an adequate degree foreign populations when and where we desire.<sup>10</sup>

## PSYOP by Necessity

Despite concerns by some regarding the appropriateness or legitimacy of military involvement in global PSYOP or strategic communication efforts, others see such as a necessity, essential given the lack of capability or willingness by other departments of government to fill the communication void. PSYOP expertise is regionally, culturally, and experientially based; it has skills and knowledge uncommon among the other agents of influence. Jerrold M. Post, a highly regarded scholar of the psychology of terrorism, contends that "there has been little attention to the potential of strategic PSYOP in undermining the enemy to prepare the battlefield . . . PSYOP should be the primary weapon in the war against terrorism." According to Post, if terrorism is an inherently psychological phenomenon, then it should stand to reason that psychological operations would and should be a primary method of attack or defense at the global planning level.<sup>11</sup> Since the War on Terrorism is less a shooting war involving guns, boats, or planes than a psychological war involving ideas, images, ideologies, information, and intentions, the first

and most essential condition is to shape or prepare the psychological battlespace in a manner favorable to our intentions, an effort to which PSYOP is integral. To this end, the U.S. Army must regain the psychological advantage, retain the informational edge, and keep its message straight.

Owing to the sheer magnitude and scope of the information and influence effort, PSYOP units can no longer be trained and equipped in a one-size-fits-all proposition. The PSYOP force has only recently undergone a major realignment, the result being that the two reserve PSYOP groups formerly under U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) have been reassigned to Army Reserve Command (USARC). (The Army's only active group, the 4th, remains under USASOC). The PSYOP branch must now differentiate between active- and reserve-component tactical, operational, and strategic levels of foreign media operations, and public communications; and between conventional, special, and interagency operations.

The active-duty PSYOP force is uniquely suited to support special operations and sensitive operational and strategic-level foreign information and communication programs. Reserve component forces should assume the other mission of predominately providing support to the conventional Army (from brigade to corps level) and reinforce active-duty PSYOP efforts consistent with mission and intent. Although the pairing of active-duty PSYOP with special operations and reserve PSYOP with conventional forces should vastly increase the capabilities, scope, impact, and effectiveness of foreign-aimed communications programs and dissemination potential, the new paradigm prompts a reexamination of PSYOP doctrine, organization, training and education, leadership development, material and equipment, personnel management and force development, and facilities (DOTLMPF) authorizations to assure full operational effectiveness. Additionally, the distinction between PSYOP and PA operations at different levels must also be reassessed, keeping in mind that—

- The specialties of PSYOP and PA are mutually supportive in today's information environment, with policy and law in place that sufficiently protect the rights of American citizens.
- PSYOP and PA have complementary talents and techniques similar to foreign relations, media operations, public communications, mass communications,

marketing, advertising, sales, and public relations directed towards a foreign target audience.

- Tactical PSYOP engages in media production, development, and dissemination in partnership with foreign PA detachments (active and reserve).

- Operational-level psychological operations leverage IO and interagency tools and techniques to engage early, often, and accurately.

- Defense and interagency information programs must coordinate without friction.

- Strategic-level communication expertise must be harnessed to engage and influence states and macro-cultures.

Given that two-thirds of the PSYOP force (and PA expertise as well) now resides in the Army Reserve, we must also consider rebalancing the force, creating active-duty brigade-level authorizations, and reviewing proponent-led accessions, training, and retention strategies. Inevitably, a future strategic communication framework must account for tactical PSYOP and/or PA as the basis for “information for effect” that assimilates the skills of foreign journalists, videographers, and broadcasters with the talents of regionally experienced PSYOP specialists into foreign media operational constructs. These constructs would be supported by more specialized PSYOP regional/operational support sufficient to bridge the cultural gaps between U.S. and foreign target audiences and work the information seams between potentially neutral and friendly target audiences.

Finally, PSYOP’s image must be rendered more acceptable so that it can be employed effectively in current and future information environments and strategic communication frameworks. The branch must lose its pejorative connotations both inside and outside the Army. References to it must simply roll off the tongue; it should be easy to mention and talk about. To rehabilitate PSYOP will require “Total Army” participation.<sup>12</sup> The active-reserve realignment of the

PSYOP force cannot be allowed to widen the gap between message developers and disseminators.

More generally, partnership among organizations responsible for strategic information development and dissemination has become a necessity rather than a good thing to do if convenient. If information is central to our ability to shape the future battlefield or geopolitical landscape, then unity of informational effort and purpose is vital. Moreover, doctrinal concepts of unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency, which critically rely on the ability of PSYOP and PA to inform and influence audiences across the globe where we are and where we are not, are notably central to our ability to succeed in the War on Terrorism. Therefore, PSYOP, PA, and public diplomacy stovepipes or firewalls must come down, and collaborative bridges must be built. PSYOP must leverage the full potential of IO tools (information applications), tactics, and techniques to maximize the influence necessary to isolate and eliminate aggressive non-state actors and transnational threats. We can no longer afford mistaken identities or dysfunctional relationships among PSYOP, DOD public affairs, State Department public diplomacy, and IO.

While some useful initiatives (e.g., realignment) are already underway, the realities of the foreign communication challenges we face demand even greater Army structural and organizational change. Such change should place at the center of campaign planning the integration of nonstandard special and conventional PSYOP-like forces able to operate across the continuum of warfare (peace to combat and back to peace). These forces must be precisely designed and efficiently echeloned to function and integrate informative multimedia operations at all levels of war. To achieve such capabilities, an amalgam of PSYOP and PA professionals would provide the required depth. Such a team would comprise a more transformational, better focused “inform and influence” investment; would ensure greater assimilation of pertinent skills (PSYOP, IO, and PA); and would enable increased collaboration with both the public and private sectors.

## Information Mania: The Army’s Persuasive Partnerships

Given the recent realignment of Army Reserve PSYOP forces from USASOC to USARC and their re-designation as conventional forces, the timing is

***...we must...consider rebalancing the force, creating active-duty brigade-level authorizations, and reviewing proponent-led accessions, training, and retention strategies.***



ideal for a formal reevaluation of the relationship between IO and PSYOP. Now that two-thirds of the PSYOP force works for the conventional Army, PSYOP should be more fully integrated into Army-wide planning, programming, exercises, and operations. Likewise, the increased presence of PSYOP in Army formations should greatly facilitate its effective synchronization with the Army's other key agents of influence, public affairs and civil affairs. This can only be good for the Army in both the short and long term. In contrast, the suppression and/or complication of the use of PSYOP and other information activities caused by the redundant IO staff proposed by future Army IO doctrine would be detrimental to the Army in part and to the credibility of the PSYOP and PA message as a whole.

The proper, untrammelled employment of PSYOP and its supporting agents of influence can provide the Army greater effects across the entire continuum of conflict and add greater full-spectrum potential to the Army's brigade combat teams. It can influence the psychological and physical aspects of the battle and information space in a manner that could lead to success in the War on Terrorism. There is no reason to consign ourselves to a less responsive, less efficient capability.

## PSYOP Merger

As they are currently configured, the IO and PSYOP forces are improperly balanced. PSYOP has greater tactical potential than the other four sub-elements combined (EW, CNO, deception, OPSEC). The other sub-elements of IO—minus PSYOP—tend toward greater operational- and strategic-level presence and potential. Not surprisingly, PSYOP has the fewest assignments on staffs and in agencies at corps and above that are critical to the Army's effort to communicate consistently with foreign audiences anywhere, anytime.

Inevitably, there is a disparity between the planners (IO) and operators (PSYOP). If the operational environment changes and our threat becomes more or less symmetric, so too must the IO force adapt, rebalance, or assimilate into the tactical warfighter structure to assure operator-level confidence and responsiveness consistent with the scheme of maneuver. Understandably, the Army would want more operators than specialty planners. However, the way the IO force is configured, the ratio of plan-

***Functional-area-designated IO staff officers (planners) responsible for planning and integrating IO capabilities (operators) at all levels are not necessarily well qualified in any one of the IO sub-components.***

ners to operators is skewed—there are simply too many planners and perhaps not enough operators.

Another problem caused by the IO force configuration is that it almost works against the creation of expertise in the IO ranks. Commanders and their primary staffs must engage in capabilities-based planning, in the course of which subject matter experts or branch officers must accurately represent the capabilities they bring to the table. This accuracy is crucial to ensuring that intended effects and outcomes can be achieved. But, functional-area-designated IO staff officers (planners) responsible for planning and integrating IO capabilities (operators) at all levels are not necessarily well qualified in any one of the IO sub-components. Thus, PSYOP, EW, and CNO practitioners are often subordinate to planners or IO generalists less knowledgeable, experienced, or qualified in the capability (or capabilities) they are employing.

This imbalance is a feature unique to IO; tactically, our Army employs “fully qualified” branch officers and senior NCOs who are specialists in the field (subject matter experts) capable of planning, organizing, and directing the execution of capabilities they are uniquely familiar with and knowledgeable about. The Combined Arms Center's proposed changes to IO doctrine seem to address this inequity by returning the responsibilities for planning and integrating the capabilities of the IO sub-elements (minus PSYOP) to experts elsewhere on the staff.

Under the proposed doctrinal revision, the minority IO staff officer will be the integrator for PSYOP and possibly PA. Accordingly, we must have a more practical and pertinent framework from which to launch a professional career force dedicated to the tactics, tools, and techniques used to inform and

influence. The underlying rationale for reformulating the IO construct has everything to do with “doing” more and “planning” less, the intent being to provide the warfighter a ready, responsive, and reliable IO capability that has the capacity to inform and influence combatants and noncombatants in the commander’s area of operations. A more appropriate model would show that PSYOP might be more useful tactically (at the brigade combat team level) than the other elements of IO. It would also show that there is no great intellectual leap required to add the other elements of IO, as supporting efforts, to a more potent and persuasive PSYOP effort.

Accordingly, the figure below reorients the IO model and sets PSYOP as the base for Army IO, forming the tactical “foreign media operations” center of attention and main effort at corps and below. The other IO sub-elements offer greater effectiveness if employed as supporting efforts along the PA and PSYOP axes of inform and influence. Furthermore, the figure portrays the more practical and precise method of employing PSYOP (and PA) as the Army’s agents of inform and influence both today and tomorrow. IO practitioners or generalists, absent education and experience in either of the two disciplines, will lack sufficient credentials to contribute effectively and credibly to this mission.

These un-credentialed officers might find themselves assimilating into a future Army career force that encompasses the talents and techniques of PSYOP and PA, which could conceivably engage

in unencumbered foreign media operations. PA and PSYOP are converging as the means and methods of informing and influencing foreign media and populations become remarkably similar and necessarily mutually supportive. Thus, the more pristine PA aimed at domestic audiences is delineated on the left (to inform) and the more sensitive, more compartmented PSYOP is at the right (to influence).

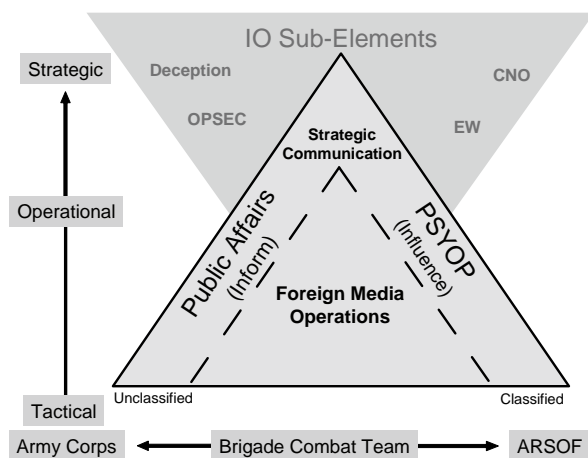
Meanwhile, both PA and PSYOP professionals find themselves specialists in a career force committed to speaking with one voice in a manner that is consistent with commander and national interest and intent. In the figure, the two career fields converge at the triangle’s pinnacle, “strategic communication.” There, each field’s “most qualified” officers will compete for service at the highest level as our Army’s preeminent communication professionals.

## Last Word

Going forward, we will need to reevaluate the IO and PSYOP assignments in every brigade combat team and maneuver headquarters, as well as in the Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Strategic Command, Joint Forces Command, Forces Command, the several combat training centers, and elsewhere. We must ensure that Army PSYOP has a fully sufficient structural, cultural, organizational, and institutional presence to be a successful combat multiplier and peacetime contributor now and in the future.

To achieve such influential capabilities, we need to secure a strategic communication framework from the bottom up based on the policies, process, principles, and practices of psychological operations and public affairs. We must also incorporate into this framework the skills, talents, and tradecraft of public relations and marketing and advertising specialists with foreign culture and language expertise to complement the analysis, planning, and integrating talents of seasoned veterans from a career field that understands and can communicate our Nation’s interests and objectives. The focus of this DOD “strategic communication framework” would be foreign audiences only.

Ultimately, to better employ PSYOP and PA in the future means we must invest now in an “IO” career force, one that is an easily recognizable and dominant feature on an operational roadmap that



**Figure: A better way to do IO business:  
PSYOP and PA in the lead.**

***We must ensure that Army PSYOP has a fully sufficient structural, cultural, organizational, and institutional presence to be a successful combat multiplier ...***

employs all the military's information weapons. This force must have a strong, active psychological and analytical base capable of operational preparation of the psychological, informational, and multimedia battlespace. It should be reinforced by a similarly well educated, knowledgeable, experienced, and expert reserve force. PSYOP in support of the maneuver commander disseminates information that appeals to the masses, generally to inform rather than influence. Meanwhile, PSYOP in special operations performs discreet and potentially classified missions. Designed to influence with potency for personal effect, special operations PSYOP purveys more sensitive, more protected and precise information to affect foreign target audiences of operational and strategic significance.

From tactical to strategic, one active-component group and two reserve-component groups proudly identifying themselves as PSYOP will continue to deploy to inform and influence target populations in support of U.S. operations. In OEF, OIF, and elsewhere in the War on Terrorism, as well as on hundreds of foreign deployments supporting unified combatant commanders elsewhere around the world, PSYOP teams, companies, battalions, and groups will be present to make an informative and influential difference.

Current and pending doctrinal and structural problems aside, DOD has recognized the importance of PSYOP to the Army of the future. PSYOP, the ability to favorably influence foreign audiences with information at the right time, place, and intensity in the "war of ideas" is perceived favorably within our military. Approved manpower increases that will

double the active-duty PSYOP force and increase the reserve component by one-third indicate DOD confidence in PSYOP's ability to play a critical role in the War on Terrorism. Furthermore, the establishment of PSYOP as an official Army branch is a clear signal that we understand the importance of being able to influence foreign audiences with information and actions—two means that will promote U.S. interests and reduce the risk to American Soldiers well into the future. With so much at stake, we should be sure not to squander this considerable investment of the Army's resources in dysfunctional and redundant staff practices. PSYOP is the Army's IO force of choice; expeditionary, full spectrum, interagency-capable, joint interoperable, and a proven competitor in today's complex information environment. **MR**

## NOTES

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# Understanding the Link between **CENTER OF GRAVITY** and **MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT**

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Colonel Robert C. Coon, U.S. Army, Retired

**D**URING THE PAST DECADE there has been a proliferation of literature on effective methodologies to identify and neutralize, weaken, or destroy a center of gravity (COG).<sup>1</sup> This trend continues with the rewrites of Joint Publications (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*, and JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*.<sup>2</sup> However, despite these impressive doctrinal developments, understanding and applying the COG concept remains problematic. During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), several retired general officers provided military analyses and commentary for the news networks. Unfortunately, there was little agreement in their views. They described the Iraqi COG as being comprised of Saddam Hussein, Baghdad, intelligence, and Republican Guard forces, among others.

## Identifying the COG

What makes identifying a COG so difficult? A partial answer lies in the relationship between the COG and mission accomplishment. Joint Publication 3-0 links the COG and victory: “In theory, direct attacks against enemy COGs resulting in their destruction or neutralization is the most direct path to victory.”<sup>3</sup> A similar statement appears in JP 5-0: “The essence of operational art lies in being able to produce the right combination of effects in time, space, and purpose relative to a COG to neutralize, weaken, defeat, or destroy it. In theory, this is the most direct path to mission accomplishment.”<sup>4</sup>

The only difference between the two statements is the change from “victory” to “mission accomplishment.” However, although the statements clearly codify the relationship between neutralizing a COG and accomplishing the mission, they do not explain what that relationship is. Without an explanation, doctrine creates unreasonable expectations, if not confusion. The relationship between the COG and mission accomplishment is complex, and understanding it is a critical step in the joint operation planning process. Thus, while evolving U.S. joint doctrine seems headed in the right direction, it still fails to provide the necessary explicit details needed to understand this relationship.

This article examines the link between mission accomplishment at the operational level of war and neutralizing, weakening, or destroying a COG.<sup>5</sup> It does this by exploring four linked propositions:

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PHOTO: The toppled statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square, downtown Baghdad, 9 April 2003. (AP)

- Mission accomplishment at the operational level is the Department of Defense's contribution to a strategic end state in war. Specifically, mission accomplishment is achieved when a military force imposes its will on an adversary.

- Mission accomplishment can be achieved either by forcing an adversary to change his intentions or by eliminating an adversary's ability to resist imposition of will. By joint doctrine, the preferred method is to force a rapid change of intentions.

- Neutralization or destruction of an adversary capability may have no behavioral effect on an adversary leader (no change of intentions).

- An adversary decides to change intentions as a result of situational awareness. However, joint doctrine does not adequately acknowledge this cause-and-effect relationship; in fact, it advocates neutralization of the means by which an adversary obtains situational awareness.

## Mission Accomplishment

Since the COG and mission accomplishment are linked in joint doctrine, it is important to agree on what mission accomplishment is for an operational-level commander. Although JP 1-02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, does not define mission accomplishment, the National Military Strategy addresses it under "The Mission of the Armed Forces."<sup>6</sup> One of the specified missions of the Armed Forces is to "prevail against adversaries." Clausewitz, on page one of Book One in *On War*, provides insight on what prevailing against adversaries entails: "War is . . . an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."<sup>7</sup> But how does a force impose its will?

According to JP 2.0, *Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Joint Operations*, "Combatant and subordinate joint force commanders and their component commanders focus on military capabilities and intentions of adversaries and potential adversaries."<sup>8</sup> This suggests that we should attempt to impose our will on an adversary by attacking or otherwise seeking to affect his capabilities and intentions.

Clausewitz seems to anticipate at least part of 2.0's claim and its implications. He observed that to overcome your enemy you must match your effort against his power of resistance, which can be expressed as the product of two inseparable factors. The first factor is the total means at his disposal—in other

words, his capabilities. Clausewitz's second factor, however, is not the adversary's intentions, but his strength of will. The extent of an adversary's means is a matter mainly of figures and should be measurable. But the strength of his will is much less easy to determine and can only be gauged approximately, by the strength of the motive animating it.<sup>9</sup>

If we listen to Clausewitz, one way to impose one's will on an adversary is to neutralize or destroy his capability to resist. When an adversary's capability is rendered ineffective and resistance is no longer possible, what the adversary leader wants to do militarily does not matter—he has no options. This approach is known as attrition warfare.<sup>10</sup> In theory, the attrition approach seems reasonable. In practice, though, it is quite difficult (if not impossible) and time-consuming, and it requires substantial resources to render a determined foe completely defenseless. Also, residual military capability might re-form as a guerrilla force and employ irregular warfare to continue a conflict.

According to joint doctrine and emerging concepts, attrition warfare is not how the U.S. envisions fighting future wars. As JP 3-0 explains, when national leaders decide to conduct a major operation or campaign to achieve national strategic objectives, "the general goal is to prevail against the enemy as quickly as possible, conclude hostilities, and establish conditions favorable to the [host nation] and the United States and its multinational partners."<sup>11</sup> It follows that the preferred method for imposing coalition will is to seek a rapid change in intentions.

Two examples of an adversary possessing the means to resist but electing to accept imposition of will are Japan and Iraq. While Japan still had a sizeable force capable of defending the homeland in 1945, the country's leaders surrendered to the Allies following the dropping of two atomic bombs and Russia's declaration of war.<sup>12</sup> Operation Desert Storm is a more recent example of forcing an adversary leader to change his intentions. Although Saddam Hussein still had the capability to resist coalition forces, the campaign was clearly not going his way after a substantial conventional force was brought to bear against him. Consequently, he submitted to the will of the coalition before his Republican Guard was destroyed or before the coalition could initiate new objectives, such as an attack toward Baghdad.

While a coalition might be able to impose its will on an adversary, doing so will not, by itself, normally be sufficient to achieve a strategic end state. However, successful imposition of will, in concert with the effects of other elements of national power, can establish an environment that might help attain the desired strategic end state.

## Changing Intentions

Ultimately, according to joint doctrine, a U.S. backed coalition will seek to force a change of intentions that translates into an adversary leader's decision to capitulate. Much of that coercion will require the infliction of pain, as Martin Cook makes clear in his book *Moral Warrior*, when he observes that operational planners seek to determine "how much pain to the enemy the destruction of the target is likely to cause and how much pain the enemy leadership is willing to absorb before it will capitulate."<sup>13</sup>

There is a large body of literature on decision theory, and joint doctrine incorporates much of it as part of the joint operation planning process. To figure out where and how best to apply pain to force capitulation, an operational planner must think along with the adversary leader and attempt to understand what that leader is thinking and feeling. The knowledge that all strategic decision makers go through a four-step process of framing, gathering intelligence, coming to conclusions, and learning from feedback can assist the operational planner in gaining insight into the adversary leader's mindset.<sup>14</sup>

**Framing.** For a coalition planner, understanding the adversary leader's framing process is critical to linking the COG to mission accomplishment. Framing is "defining what must be decided and determining in a preliminary way what criteria would cause you to prefer one option over another."<sup>15</sup> In effect, framing means the adversary leader assesses the situation and determines where his pain threshold is: Will extensive loss of life or damage to his country's infrastructure be reason to capitulate? Will he cease hostilities to retain power or some level of military capability? Will he retreat or surrender to save face? If an operational planner can gain a proper understanding of the adversary leader's frame, the coalition will be less likely to waste time, effort, and resources trying to neutralize capabilities that are not critically important to the adversary.

The 1999 NATO campaign in Kosovo is an example of a coalition force misreading an adversary's frame. NATO forces began with a limited attack focused on Serb military and security forces "to force [Serb President Slobodan] Milosevic to comply with the directions given by the international community."<sup>16</sup> After the conflict, U.S. General Wesley K. Clark realized that a variety of factors (among them loss of outside support), and not just military losses, eventually caused Milosevic to surrender.<sup>17</sup> According to a RAND Corporation study, "the evidence suggests that Milosevic consistently viewed his options with regard to the Kosovo conflict solely through a lens of self-interest."<sup>18</sup> Two points are worth noting: NATO did not fully understand what was important to Milosevic when it began the campaign by attacking his military and security units; and even after the war, analysts could not identify one specific condition or event that led Milosevic to capitulate.

Understanding how the adversary leader will frame his decision criteria might depend on whether the coalition campaign's objective is to restore a preexisting situation (removing Iraqi forces from Kuwait, for example) or change a regime.<sup>19</sup> In the first situation, the adversary leader might believe that accepting a return to prewar conditions is a better option than the alternatives, which could include destruction of



A Marine sits atop his AAV-7 in Gnjilane, Kosovo, 1 July 1999. Marines and Sailors of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed to Kosovo as part of Joint Guardian, an operation to provide peace and stability to the war-torn country.

DOD



his forces or his country's infrastructure, or direct personal attack. The adversary leader's frame might drive his decision to abandon his aims—to change his intentions—fairly quickly.

In a situation where a coalition's objective is regime change and the adversary leader's primary criterion is the retention of power, the leader's only realistic option is to continue to resist with all means available. In either type of campaign—one with limited objectives or one seeking regime change—operational planners must acknowledge that the criteria that could compel an adversary leader to capitulate might not be fixed; instead, they could be contextual and extensively based on coalition objectives.

Saddam faced both types of coalition operations. In 1991, he abandoned his goal of annexing Kuwait because coalition forces achieved their limited objectives, which included removing his occupying forces from Kuwait and destroying many of the units that enabled him to move against Kuwait. In 2003, facing a coalition seeking regime change, he was unwilling to surrender knowing the result would be total loss of power. In spite of the coalition forces' overwhelming success on the battlefield, Saddam's intentions remained unaltered. He did not order his government, military, or citizens to submit to coalition authority; in fact, he did the opposite.

**Gathering intelligence.** The adversary leader's decision making is predicated to no small degree on the intelligence he is given. Analysts and planners must keep in mind that the information an adversary leader gets comes from intelligence subject to distortion and misinterpretation. Even if coalition forces understand the mental frame the adversary leader will use to make decisions, they cannot ensure that he will actually get the information he needs to understand what has happened and is happening in the operational environment. In fact, the adversary leader's capitulation criteria could be met without him even knowing it.

**Coming to conclusions.** Even if the adversary leader frames the problem properly and gathers all of the relevant intelligence, his decision might still not be a good one, or an expected one.<sup>20</sup>

**Learning from feedback.** The adversary leader faces an uncooperative environment in which it may be difficult to apply any lessons learned.<sup>21</sup> Once conflict begins, he might not get another chance to learn from or make decisions of similar magnitude,

especially if the coalition objective is regime change. The operational planner must take this into account when assessing the adversary leader's mindset.

In summary, decision theory tells us that planners who recommend an adversary COG should base the recommendation on an understanding of the adversary leader's frame, what he knows (or will know when the presumed COG is neutralized), how he makes decisions, and what he has learned from past decisions. Unfortunately, in practice many of these factors are neither known nor determinable.

## Understanding Adversary Leaders

Joint Publication 2-01.3, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace*, states that as the joint force determines the significant characteristics of the operational area, one of the factors to consider is the "psychological characteristics of adversary decision making." According to the JP, understanding the leader is important in helping predict how that leader might respond in a given situation.<sup>22</sup> One problem with this doctrine is that it presumes strategic leaders are predictable.

Carl A. Barksdale, a former student at the Naval War College, analyzed three wars in an effort to determine if there were any patterns in the strategic decision-making process that would prompt national leaders to ultimately abandon their quest for strategic objectives in conflict.<sup>23</sup> He analyzed U.S. decisions following the 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the Soviet Union's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1989, and Israel's decision to withdraw from Lebanon in May 2000.

Barksdale's conclusion? It is still not clear how leaders of those countries made their decisions. He believes that the salience of decisional inputs to a leader cannot be determined. In short, he found little evidence to show that a better understanding of the history and cultures of the countries would help outside observers predict such decisions. Moreover, Barksdale doubts any future system will be able to predict decisions effectively. Nonetheless, current and emerging doctrine advocates a better understanding of adversary culture.<sup>24</sup>

Through war gaming, a coalition might be able to predict the physical, functional, and possibly systemic effects of its planned actions against COGs.<sup>25</sup>

Predicting a specific behavioral effect on a leader, however, might not be possible. The adversary leader might have little or no idea as to what factors will actually drive his decisions, especially those leading to defeat. If so, where does this leave planners as a major operation unfolds? Following neutralization or destruction of a presumed COG, four outcomes appear possible:

- *Abdication or death of the adversary leader.*

This outcome includes the special situation where the adversary leader is viewed as a COG. The adversary leader flees or is killed, and adversarial forces are no longer under central control. Regardless of what happens to the leader, his absence or demise will create an extremely complex situation for the coalition. If no new leader emerges, imposing the coalition's will will require changing the intentions of multiple (and potentially heretofore unknown) subleaders throughout the government or military; continuing the effort to eliminate adversarial capability; or a combination of both. Moreover, there might be little or no intelligence on how emerging or potential leaders will or could operate and make decisions. A recent example of the latter situation occurred during OIF, when Major General James Mattis expressed concern about the lack of information available on the Iraqi commanders he faced in the early stages of the conflict.<sup>26</sup>

- *Negotiation of a settlement short of surrender.*

The adversary leader abandons his strategic goals to halt coalition military action, which could lead to some type of compromise.

- *Capitulation.* The adversary leader recognizes the futility of pursuing his objectives and surrenders.

- *No apparent change in adversary intentions.*

The adversary leader either does not understand what happened or still believes he can achieve his strategic objectives in spite of the loss of capability. The conflict will continue, with coalition forces neutralizing or destroying subsequent COGs until the adversary leader reaches his psychological threshold of pain (if one exists) or until his capability to resist is completely eliminated. In effect, the coalition will shift its aim from forcing a change of intentions to prosecuting attrition warfare as a way to impose its will. It is important to note that the adversary leader's decision will determine such a change in the nature of the conflict. If he continues to resist regardless of

the effectiveness of coalition efforts, the coalition must either continue fighting in hopes of eventually forcing a change of intentions (with the possibility of never achieving that goal) or modify its objectives.

In summary, neutralizing, weakening, or destroying successive COGs might lead to mission accomplishment at the operational level of war if the adversary leader capitulates. If he doesn't, the coalition must be prepared to continue to erode his capability through attrition, rendering the adversary defenseless and leading to imposition of its will. The latter option, however, is not how the United States either envisions or wants to fight future wars.

## The Importance of Situational Awareness

To be able to make informed decisions about the status of his warfighting capacity, the adversary leader must have situational awareness of the effect of coalition operations. If he does not, his COG could be neutralized but, unaware of his predicament, he will continue to fight. The adversary leader's situational awareness is certainly no given: the great extent of the modern operational environment will preclude his observation of most if not all of the events occurring within it; and the information conduit leading from an effect to the adversary leader is relatively fragile and can be easily disrupted. If the coalition seeks a change of intentions based on effects against COGs, it must ensure that the adversary leader retains an information conduit that enables situational awareness.

An example of strategic lack of awareness was evident in OIF when Mohammed Said al-Sahaf ("Baghdad Bob"), the Iraqi Minister of Information, declared at a press conference that coalition forces were nowhere near Baghdad. Even as he spoke, coalition forces were actively securing key positions throughout the city. Many viewers dismissed his claim as a laughable attempt at propaganda; in fact, he and other Iraqi military leaders had no idea how successful the coalition had been.<sup>27</sup>

Emerging doctrine recognizes the need to understand how the adversary uses his links and nodes. Joint Publication 3-0 refers to both the positive and negative effects of degrading the adversary's command and control (C2) system, and JP 3-13, *Information Operations*, mentions the enemy feedback mechanism for gaining situational awareness.<sup>28</sup>



AP Photo/SKY

**Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf, nicknamed “Baghdad Bob” by coalition troops, tells reporters that there are no enemy soldiers in the capital just hours before the city fell, 7 April 2003.**

However, there is no mention of the importance of ensuring that an adversary leader retains at least enough situational awareness to tell him of the effects of coalition operations against presumed COGs.

There are several other considerations operational planners must take into account when considering an adversary’s situational awareness. For one, there might be a delay between an action and the adversary leader’s (or any leader’s) understanding of the overall effects of the action. The Tet Offensive was a series of tactical disasters for the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese, but uncorrected press reports of quite visible tactical actions “convinced most Americans that the war could not be won in an acceptable time and at an acceptable cost.”<sup>29</sup> Over the long term, the result was an information victory for the North that did much to end U.S. participation in the war.

Another factor to consider regarding situational awareness is that an observed effect must often be delivered to the adversary leader, normally through communications links and nodes.<sup>30</sup> Unless there is a direct line to the leader, the information will pass through successive headquarters where it might be subjected to intentional suppression, misinterpretation, or omissions caused by staff procedures, human errors, or technical distortions and problems. During the major combat phase of OIF, bad news on the battlefield from the Iraqi perspective was either suppressed or softened in successive Iraqi headquarters.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the degradation inherent in the adversary’s information-handling procedures, U.S. joint doctrine advocates military operations that break the adversary’s information conduit. Joint Publication 5-0 proposes isolating the adversary force from its command and control as an indirect means to get at a COG.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, in a vignette on future warfare, the Joint Functional Concept for Force Application implies that disrupting and blinding enemy C2 is desirable.<sup>33</sup> Coalition targeting resulting in electronic and physical isolation of adversary units and C2 nodes could break the information conduit at the tactical and operational levels. Coalition forces could neutralize a presumed COG to drive an adversary decision, but could simultaneously interfere with the flow of intelligence that a decision maker needs to support the decision sought.

Situational awareness at the adversary leader’s location might also be a problem. Someone must receive the message, understand it, and be willing to deliver the bad news to the appropriate authority. Unfortunately, not all leaders accept bad news well. In fact, U.S. Army leadership doctrine recognizes that leaders occasionally shoot the messenger.<sup>34</sup> Saddam did not welcome bad news. When asked by the Iraq Survey Group after OIF-I how Saddam treated people who brought him bad news, Ali Hasan Al Majid (“Chemical ‘Ali’”), who was part of Saddam’s inner circle, said he did not know. The implication is that people did not bring bad news to Saddam.<sup>35</sup>

Another potential break in the information conduit can occur when the leader deliberately restricts the flow of information. During the Vietnam War, President Lyndon B. Johnson “blocked the avenues by which he might obtain the [Joint] Chiefs’ advice...” and never received the results of a Pentagon war game that indicated flaws in his strategy.<sup>36</sup>

Leader intransigence is yet another reason why an adversary might not capitulate. When presented with bad news, the adversary leader must acknowledge the effect of the event. Some simply do not. Hitler refused to recognize the precarious state of General Friedrich Paulus’s 6th Army at Stalingrad. Despite messages describing deplorable conditions and 6th Army’s low prospects for survival, Hitler ordered Paulus to hold on. Hitler was unwilling to accept the reality that an airlift could not adequately supply





LBJ Library, Yoichi R. Okamoto

**President Lyndon B. Johnson takes a break from work in the Oval Office, January 1966. Historians have criticized Johnson for trying to micromanage the Vietnam War from his office in Washington.**

Paulus's force. The loss of 6th Army cost Germany over 100,000 men.<sup>37</sup>

While an adversary leader must have situational awareness to make a decision favorable to the coalition, the assumption that there *is* an adversary leader to make the decision might not be valid. This problem is created when the adversary leader is believed to be the COG. U.S. President George W. Bush decided to initiate the running start in OIF with a “decapitation strike . . . intending to kill Saddam Hussein and the senior regime leadership in one fell swoop.”<sup>38</sup> But if the strike had been successful, who would have told Iraq's armies and its people to stand down? With whom would Bush's commanders have negotiated an end to the fighting? In some cases, a direct attack on the adversary leader might not get the coalition closer to mission accomplishment. In fact, it might create problems, such as there being no strategic decision makers or conversely, multiple, potentially unknown, decision makers.<sup>39</sup>

## The Importance of a Clear Information Conduit

Once the adversary leader decides to capitulate, his decision must be passed to his people and military. This, too, is not a given, as continued Japanese resistance in the Philippines long after the end of World War II attests. Additionally, the leader's commanders must accept his decision and submit to coalition will. If enemy forces no longer recognize the leader's authority and ignore his orders, COG neutralization will not lead to immediate change of intention.

Perhaps the best example of a national leader who lost authority is Napoleon III during the Franco-Prussian War. After attempting to rescue Marshal Achille Bazaine's forces at Metz, he was captured at the battle of Sedan in September 1870. When news of his capture and subsequent capitulation reached Paris, the city responded with a bloodless revolution and recognized new leadership under General Louis Jules Trochu, Léon Gambetta, and Jules Favre. Napoleon III's authority as the recognized leader was effectively negated, and the war continued until the armistice in February 1871.<sup>40</sup>

While essential to conveying coalition effects to a leader, an intact conduit of information can be a double-edged sword. If it functions effectively, it allows the adversary to control his forces and resources. Thus, a risk assessment is required to consider the adversary leader's need for situational awareness, the desired strategic end state, and the potential for adversary tactical or operational successes resulting from accurate situational awareness. The fact remains, though, that an adversary leader who does not understand the precarious situation his country and military are in has no reason to capitulate. U.S. joint doctrine must acknowledge the need to leave the adversary an operational conduit of information, one that stretches from effect to adversary leader to the leader's forces and people.

Interestingly, aspects of joint doctrine acknowledge the importance of the decision maker, the information conduit to him, and the decision process. Joint doctrine on military deception implicitly recognizes the need to leave an adversary leader some means of situational awareness: “The deception must target the adversary decision maker capable of taking the desired action(s). The adversary's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance system is normally not the target; rather,



Otto von Bismarck and Napoleon III after the Battle of Sedan.

it [the deception target] is the primary conduit used in MILDEC [military deception] to convey selected information to the decision maker."<sup>41</sup> Joint doctrine also describes reasons why deceptions fail, including the target's failure to receive the story.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, current joint doctrine directly associated with the COG and mission accomplishment is not as clear on this subject as we might wish.

## Points for Review

The COG concept has been in the joint community for 15 years and has survived 4 major operations and multiple small-scale contingencies. The process associated with selecting a COG has proven to be extremely useful in focusing limited resources on key capabilities to drive a change of intentions by an adversary leader. Overall, the concept appears valid.

To accomplish its mission at the operational level of war, a coalition must impose its will on an adversary. Joint doctrine states that the preferred outcome of such an imposition is a rapid change in adversary intentions. Thus, using a construct similar to that used in deception operations, a coalition should focus its efforts on influencing the adversary leader and his decisions.

Neutralizing what are believed to be COGs might not lead an adversary leader to change his intentions. If the leader never capitulates and the coalition continues to neutralize adversary capabilities, intentions ultimately do not matter. Once the capability to resist

is eliminated, the adversary leader will either submit to coalition will, be killed, or flee. In any case, the coalition will be in a position to dictate terms to the nation and its emerging leaders. If adversary intentions do not change, the coalition must continue to neutralize or destroy adversary capability in order to impose its (the coalition's) will.

Identifying and neutralizing a COG is a step toward mission accomplishment. However, operational planners must also understand the adversary leader's mind and world view. They must ensure he has situational awareness of coalition effects and possesses the ability to communicate his decisions to fielded forces. Failure to ensure that the adversary leader can understand the physical, functional, and

systemic effects the coalition achieves might needlessly prolong the conflict.

Clausewitz maintains that "everything in war is simple, but the simplest thing is difficult."<sup>43</sup> Commanders and operational planners should not be disappointed or believe doctrine has failed them if neutralizing what is believed to be a COG does not lead directly to mission accomplishment; for while the concept appears to be simple, the link between neutralizing the COG and accomplishing the mission is neither well understood nor well documented.

Clausewitz made clear the link between neutralizing a COG and victory, and U.S. joint doctrine has adopted Clausewitz's COG concept.<sup>44</sup> The emerging joint doctrine on operations and planning must take the next step: it must clarify the link between neutralizing the COG and accomplishing the mission. **MR**

## NOTES

1. Clausewitz defined the center of gravity (COG) as the "hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends" (*On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret [New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976], 595-96). The current approved joint definition is "those characteristics, capabilities, or sources of power from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight" (Joint Publication [JP] 1-02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* [Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), as amended through 8 August 2006]. The evolving joint definition is "A source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act" (JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* [Washington, DC: GPO, 26 December 2006], GL-6).


2. JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2006); JP 5-0.

3. JP 3-0, IV-12.

4. JP 5-0, IV-9.

5. JP 1-02 defines operational art as "the application of creative imagination by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, and experience—to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces" (389).

6. Richard B. Myers, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: JCS, 2004), 2.
7. Clausewitz, 75.
8. JP 2-0, *Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2000), III-2. A similar statement appears in the July 2006 draft of JP 2-0.
9. Clausewitz, 77.
10. JP 1-02 defines attrition as "the reduction of the effectiveness of a force caused by loss of personnel and materiel," 52.
11. JP 3-0, I-14.
12. Barton J. Bernstein, "Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little-Known Near-Disasters, and Modern Memory," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 72. The decision to capitulate was not a popular one with Japanese military leaders even after the second bomb. However, the emperor prevailed by agreeing to guarantee that the imperial system would be retained.
13. Martin L. Cook, *The Moral Warrior: Ethics and Service in the U.S. Military* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 86.
14. J. Edward Russo and Paul J.H. Schoemaker, *Decision Traps* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 2. Russo and Schoemaker's idea is simply another way of looking at the input-process-output and feedback models common in strategic decision-making literature.
15. Ibid.
16. Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2001), 222.
17. Ibid., 405-406.
18. Stephen T. Hosmer, *The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 2001), 2.
19. Myers, 12-13. Terms recently used to describe these situations are "swiftly defeat adversaries" and "win decisively." Some operation plans will focus on achieving a limited set of objectives. Commanders' plans to swiftly defeat adversaries will include options to alter the unacceptable behavior or policies of states, rapidly seize the initiative or prevent conflict escalation, deny an adversary sanctuary, defeat his offensive capabilities or objectives, and provide support to post-conflict stability. A campaign to win decisively will include actions to destroy an adversary's military capabilities through the integrated application of air, ground, maritime, space, and information capabilities and, potentially, remove adversary regimes when directed.
20. Russo and Schoemaker, 119.
21. Ibid., 208.
22. JP 2-01.3, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2000), II-5. Under "The Leadership," JP 2-01.3 states that "biographical background data on key adversary military and political leaders, both ruling and opposition, should be compiled. This data should include information regarding the leader's ethnic, class, and family background; education, experience, and training; and core beliefs and values. Character trait data such as a leader's core beliefs and values, perceptual biases, and decision-making style should be combined with a historical track record of that leader's past decisions. Such information may be used to construct a psychological profile for the leader that might assist in predicting how that leader may respond in a given situation. Depending on the amount of data available, it may be possible to construct a psychological profile for the leadership as a whole, as well as for specific individuals" (II-38 through II-39).
23. Carl A. Barksdale, *The Network Centric Operations—Effects Based Operations Marriage: Can it Enable Prediction of "Higher Order" Effects on the Will of the Adversary* (Newport, RI: The Naval War College, 2002), 13.
24. JP 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2006), I-8; JP 2-01.3, V-11.
25. Edward C. Mann, Gary Endersby, and Thomas R. Searle, *Thinking Effects: Effects-Based Methodology for Joint Operations* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2002), 31.
26. Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 185. One of Major General James Mattis's main concerns was lack of information on the Iraqi commanders he would face. Intelligence provided little information on their backgrounds, personalities, and how they made decisions, which left the U.S. Marine Corps to "guess what we would do in their place . . . with predictable results."
27. Gregory Fontenot, E.J. Degen, and David Tohn, *On Point* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 86. While some maintain that Mohammed Said al-Sahaf was lying to the world media, the authors of *On Point* believe, based on interviews with captured Iraqi military leaders, that al-Sahaf did not know how successful the coalition had been.
28. JP 3-13, II-2.
29. George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2002), 268.
30. JP 5-0, GL-16, GL-18. A node is an element of a system that represents a person, place or thing. A link is an element of a system that represents a behavioral, physical, or functional relationship between nodes.
31. Kevin M. Woods, Michael R. Pease, Mark E. Stout, and Williamson Murray, *Iraqi Perspectives Project* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Forces Command Joint Center for Operational Analysis, 2005), 130-48. These pages contain accounts of optimistic and incorrect reporting by Iraqi forces and leaders during the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom.
32. JP 5-0, IV-18.
33. JCS, *Joint Functional Concept for Force Application* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2004), 9.
34. "If the message you hammer home is 'There will be no mistakes,' or if you lose your temper and 'shoot the messenger' every time there's bad news, eventually your people will just stop telling you when things go wrong or suggesting how to make things go right. Then there will be some unpleasant surprises in store" (Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership* [Washington, DC: GPO, 1999], 5-25).
35. "Who Made Iraq's Strategic Decisions and Determined WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] Policy: Saddam's Place in the Regime," in "Regime Strategic Intent," *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI [Director of Central Intelligence] on Iraq's WMD*, 30 September 2004, <www.cia.gov/cia/reports/iraq\_wmd\_2004/chap1.html#sect2>.
36. H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 90.
37. Joel S. A. Hayward, *Stopped at Stalingrad: The Luftwaffe and Hitler's Defeat in the East, 1942-1943* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 310.
38. Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn, 86.
39. Stephen T. Hosmer, *Operations Against Enemy Leaders* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 2001). This document provides a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of attacks on leadership during war.
40. Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1962), 208-33.
41. JP 3-13.4, *Military Deception* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2006), I-4.
42. Ibid., IV-14.
43. Clausewitz, 119.
44. Ibid., 595-600.



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PHOTO: This image, downloaded from the Internet on 3 March 2005, shows the front cover of an online magazine purportedly posted by Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq, launching an effort to recruit Muslims to join its campaign to drive the United States and its allies from Iraq. The magazine is named *Zurwat al-Sanam*, Arabic for "The Tip of the Camel's Hump"—a reference among Islamic militants to "the epitome of belief and virtuous activity." (AP Photo)

# Of Shoes and Sites: Globalization and Insurgency

Captain Christopher M. Ford, U.S. Army, J.D.

**I**N 1965, two years before his execution at the hands of Bolivian counterinsurgent troops, Ernesto Rafael "Che" Guevara, the famed South American Marxist insurgent and guerrilla fighter, found himself deep in the African jungles of the Congo passing along advice similar to that found in his book *On Guerrilla Warfare*: "The vital necessities of the guerrillas are to maintain their arms in good condition, to capture ammunition, and, above everything else, to have adequate shoes."<sup>1</sup>

Guevara had been dispatched from Cuba to assist the Marxist Simba insurgency against the government of Mobutu Sese Seko.<sup>2</sup> His Congolese acolytes must have presented a conventional picture of an insurgency: a group of scruffy, ideological men huddled in secrecy around a charismatic leader, learning the ancient art of guerrilla warfare.

Guevara's instruction traded on insurgents of the past, most notably Mao Tse-tung, and focused on the principles of rural insurgency, a form of warfare distinguished by small cells of insurgents exploiting their knowledge of the terrain and their ability to operate independently with few organizational needs—save functional arms and, of course, good shoes.<sup>3</sup>

At roughly the same time, in another jungle across the globe, the United States was busily engaged in its distinct brand of counterinsurgent operations—Operation Rolling Thunder, the bombing campaign of North Vietnam. During the course of the campaign, which lasted until late 1968, the U.S. Air Force flew 306,380 bombing sorties.<sup>4</sup> By all accounts the operation was a failure, and quite possibly the model for how not to fight an insurgency.<sup>5</sup>

Today, 42 years later, the United States is again fighting a robust insurgency. The intervening four decades, however, have wrought a worldwide change in technology, information, mobility, culture, and warfare. These changes, collectively defined as "globalization," have touched virtually every aspect of human conduct, counterinsurgency warfare included.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the picture of the modern counterinsurgent is that of a soldier on the streets of Baghdad, dressed in an Advanced Combat Uniform, protected by ceramic body armor, communicating with a satellite phone, and armed with an M-4 carbine and a fistful of reconstruction dollars.

## What Is Insurgency?

In examining insurgency and globalization, two questions become readily apparent: (1) What is insurgency and (2) What aspects of globalization are pertinent to the discussion? We can define an insurgency as "an organized

movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict.”<sup>7</sup> Insurgency movements traditionally find their roots in a desire for social and/or political change, and then insurgencies utilize guerrilla warfare to accomplish their goals.<sup>8</sup> This distinction between insurgencies and insurgency movements is important because counterinsurgent operations are more expansive than counterguerrilla operations—the latter term refers exclusively to the engagement of the insurgency’s military force. In this article, “counterinsurgency” refers to full-spectrum operations designed to target the insurgency politically, economically, and militarily.

Successful insurgencies have certain fundamental prerequisites. Field Manual (FM) 31-20-3, *Foreign Internal Defense Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Special Forces*, summarizes these as a vulnerable population, strong leadership, and lack of government control.<sup>9</sup> The most basic requirement is the positive support or at least the acquiescence of the population. As noted by Mao Tse-tung, “Because guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and co-operation.”<sup>10</sup> A vulnerable population, electrifying leaders, and a government’s failure to control movement allow insurgencies to garner popular support more efficiently and effectively.

An insurgency must maintain popular support throughout its course, and actually increase it during its later stages. At the outset, the insurgents need support to move a radical idea, discussion, or plan from something conceptual to something tangible—to a physical (usually military) manifestation of the movement. The movement continues to require support as the government mobilizes to defend its position of power and monopoly on the use of force within the country. As the insurgency matures, it will likely progress from guerrilla to conventional warfare as it seeks to destroy (rather than harass or injure) the national power and establish ever-larger territorial bases of operation.<sup>11</sup> As this occurs, violence increases, and the insurgency must justify the violence as necessary to attain objectives the people will support: more security, more prosperity, a more just national power, and so forth.

The insurgency gains, maintains, and grows its popular support by communication, not only through

the media, but by physically treating civilians with respect. Numerous insurgent writings fully discuss this second theme, which has not changed in the face of globalization.<sup>12</sup> Oral and written communication through the media, however, has everything to do with globalization. Insurgencies communicate internally from leader to leader, leader to fighter, and fighter to fighter, and externally to civilians and the international community.<sup>13</sup> At the outset, insurgencies have to rely on secrecy to prevent the annihilation of their defenseless fledgling organization; however, their need to communicate remains high. The proliferation of technology has largely solved this problem.

## Mobile Phones and Insurgency

Globalization includes a broad range of changes that affect insurgent operations, but the most profound change is the globalization of technology.<sup>14</sup> The mobile phone has been at the forefront of the technological charge.<sup>15</sup> Since the mid-1980s, mobile-phone use throughout the world has increased at breakneck speed.<sup>16</sup> At present, 80 percent of the world’s population has mobile-phone coverage, and 25 percent has a mobile phone.<sup>17</sup> The medium’s benefits to the insurgent are obvious: it provides a remarkably effective, easy-to-use, largely anonymous global communications network at virtually no cost.<sup>18</sup>

Mobile phones do, however, present a number of problems for insurgencies. Previous insurgencies relied on personal communications from insurgent-to-insurgent and insurgent-to-civilian and tightly controlled the dissemination of information, which served both their ideological and security interests. With the advent of mobile phones, insurgent leaders’ ability to control the dissemination of essential information (i.e., ideology, strategy, etc.) has become more difficult. Mobile-phone use has also exposed the insurgent to the counterinsurgent’s technological superiority.<sup>19</sup> It is widely accepted that both the Irish Republican Army and Al-Qaeda largely abandoned mobile telecommunications because they felt they were vulnerable to counterinsurgent monitoring.<sup>20</sup>

Mobile phones have also affected the counterinsurgent, though not to the same degree. As early as May 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq was working to build a mobile-phone network in Iraq. The CPA sought to “establish



U.S. Army, SGT Tiemey P. Nowland

**U.S. Army SFC Daniel Ogawa and an interpreter examine a suspicious cell phone found outside a house in Mansour, Iraq, 4 April 2007, during a combined cordon and search mission with Iraqi Army soldiers.**

wireless service,” a laudable goal for a counterinsurgent organization.<sup>21</sup> Studies show that a rise in the use of mobile phones results in an increase in the gross domestic product, which, in turn, fosters faith in the government and helps quell insurgency.<sup>22</sup> Presumably, the CPA had a perhaps more pressing desire to establish a telecommunications network for its organizational use. Since the establishment of mobile-phone networks in Iraq in 2003, the U.S. Departments of State and Defense have utilized these networks extensively for official business. Indeed, 95 percent of U.S. military communications occurs over commercial phone lines.<sup>23</sup>

This technology, however, comes with a price. Because counterinsurgent soldiers and civilians connected with the military might be able to purchase phones for their personal use (as ours do in Iraq), the counterinsurgent can face the same security issues the insurgent faces. Insurgents can easily monitor unsecured counterinsurgent mobile-phone conversations through readily available police scanners, or they can physically tap secure and unsecured phone lines strung out building-to-building in the camps and forward operating bases of the counterinsurgency.<sup>24</sup>

## The Internet and Insurgency

Fortuitously for the insurgents, technology provided a solution to their operational security problem through a combination of two other paradigm-shifting technologies: the Internet and user-friendly “strong-encryption.” The Internet, in particular, has profoundly enhanced insurgent communications, operations, and organization.

**Impact on communication.** The Internet’s most obvious and perhaps most profound impact has been in the realm of communication. Insurgents can select from a menu of communication choices, including e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, websites, blogs, Voice over Internet Protocol, and related technologies, and use them as their needs arise. While Internet communications present the same OPSEC issues as mobile/satellite phone networks, their diversity and multiplicity of means constitute an ever-expanding cyber-universe that the counterinsurgent must monitor.

The counterinsurgent is further hobbled by the proliferation of strong-encryption software freely available on the Internet since the release of Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) 1.0 in 1991.<sup>25</sup> This software revolutionized secure communications by using complex encryption algorithms in a simplified manner accessible to the average computer user. The result: arguably unbreakable electronic communications. This technology continues to increase in strength with the release of newer programs and versions (e.g., there have been at least eight new versions of PGP). Now, the technology is being adapted to provide the same level of security for voice communications.<sup>26</sup>

The Internet also allows an insurgency to appeal to a broad swath of people both inside and outside the targeted country. Through the Internet and the associated spread of information, globalization has broadened the insurgency’s ability to propagate its message to consumers who previously would never have had access to it. Insurgent (and terrorist) organizations have quickly embraced the Internet and mobile phones to disseminate propaganda, recruit

***The Internet...has profoundly enhanced insurgent communications, operations, and organization.***



fighters, and solicit arms and financial support.<sup>27</sup> Geography and the ability to physically print and disseminate literature no longer limit insurgencies. An organization such as Hamas may find a receptive audience in a living room in Middle America as well as in a fundamentalist madrasah in the Middle East.<sup>28</sup>

**Impact on operations.** In addition to extended communications reach, the Internet provides the insurgent a fully distinct plane of operation that transcends the traditional battlefield. We do not realize the full ramifications of this yet, and an in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it is clear that insurgencies have proven adept at recognizing and adopting these new technologies. Computer hackers working for or sympathetic with insurgent movements from Serbia, Indonesia, and Mexico have attacked or defaced dozens of corporate and government websites.<sup>29</sup> Other hackers have created computer viruses to support insurgent movements or to propagate a political agenda in locations as diverse as India, Iran, Hungary, England, Bolivia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Palestine, and the United States.<sup>30</sup>

Insurgencies always seek to become more operationally effective by executing their goals more efficiently while avoiding capture, injury, or death. An insurgency's ability to maintain or increase operational efficiency in the face of counterinsurgency operations demands that the insurgency constantly seek information in order to learn, adapt, and develop.<sup>31</sup> The acquisition of information has both transitory and enduring components.

**Transitory information.** At any given instant, incoming information provides the insurgency immediately beneficial consequences. Particularized, tactical application characterizes such information. (For example, an insurgent learns that counterinsurgent troops are preparing to raid a safe house, or an insurgent procures a map showing current troop positions.) Not surprisingly, with its myriad news sites, military-interest sites, and military-related blogs, the Internet is a rich source of information.

Globalsecurity.org, for instance, provides an extraordinarily broad and deep picture of counterinsurgent forces in Iraq.<sup>32</sup> The website posts descriptions and locations of individual camps and forward operating bases, troop levels, accounts of ongoing combat operations, and detailed analysis of

current weapons systems. Most critically, it offers high-resolution satellite imagery of coalition troop positions. For instance, a series of images shows the "before" and "after" status of currently occupied coalition bases, including imagery of unhardened sleeping trailers. Google Earth, the satellite mapping service, offers similar information, and for that reason it has been publicly protested against by India, Thailand, and South Korea.<sup>33</sup>

Insurgents also reap current tactical information from the proliferation of Internet information on the manufacture of improvised explosive devices (IED). Traditional books providing the same information are readily available via websites such as Amazon.com, a cursory review of which found the following books for sale: FM 31-210, *Improvised Munitions Handbook*; FM 5-25, *Explosives and Demolitions*; *Expedient Homemade Firearms*; and *The Chemistry of Powder and Explosives*.<sup>34</sup>

**Enduring information.** The enduring aspects of information acquisition relate to the insurgency as an organization and its ability to acquire "new knowledge or technology that it then uses to make better strategic decisions, [to] improve its ability to develop and apply specific tactics, and [to] increase its chances of success in its operations."<sup>35</sup> As RAND Corporation's Brian A. Jackson notes, organizational learning is a four-part process involving acquisition, interpretation, distribution, and storage.<sup>36</sup> Globalization has facilitated each part of this process:

- The Internet provides a rich source for the *acquisition* of tactical information. As each piece of tactical information is acquired, interpreted, distributed, and stored, it becomes a building block for insurgency learning and growth.
- The Internet provides other information that is a core component of the learn/grow process, although not readily actionable: self-analysis, that is, counterinsurgent self-analysis, which aids and abets insurgent *interpretation* of gleaned information. In the case of most Western militaries, the Internet contains virtually countless internal government products analyzing all echelons and branches of service.<sup>37</sup> The interpretation of a particular piece of information is necessarily a highly individualized process; however, news stories, political commentary, interviews with soldiers and commanders, and poll numbers often facilitate this process.

- The third part of the organizational learning process requires *dissemination* of information. Dissemination of information is, of course, communication of information, a task, as noted above, immeasurably simplified by technology.

- The final step in the process involves the *storage* of information. This step ensures accumulation of a long-term institutional memory, allowing the movement to grow organizationally. Here, technology's globalization brought about a revolution in the conduct of insurgency. Where the organizational memory once resided in a handful of senior leaders and physical documents, a globalized insurgency may find its institutional memory committed to the Internet, where it is physically accessible but virtually indestructible. In the past, insurgent leaders possessed two unique qualities: they had the ability and authority to command and control, and they were the repository of the movement's institutional knowledge. Technology has rendered both qualities somewhat less than unique.

**Impact on organization.** The Internet's effect on insurgency organization and composition is related to, but distinct from, its effects on communications and operations. The dispersal of information technologies has given today's insurgencies a counterintuitive windfall. While it has diluted their leaders' ability to control information, thereby diluting the leaders' authority and power, its overall effect on the insurgency is positive.<sup>38</sup> Individual leaders no longer hold a monopoly on information disbursement and retention, but their groups have become hydra-headed entities with little or no hierarchical organization and a correspondingly diminished vulnerability. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt have coined the term "netwar" to describe the method of warfare resulting from this organizational change. It is one "in which the protagonists use . . . network forms of organization, doctrine, strategy, and communication."<sup>39</sup> Because such an organization has no center of gravity, it presents a formidable problem for the counterinsurgent.

A 2004 RAND study documented the emergence of this phenomenon in Iraq. The study found "no clear leader (or leadership); no attempt to seize and actually hold territory; and no single, defined, or unifying ideology."<sup>40</sup> The present situation in Iraq, however, presents a somewhat different scenario. Elements of the insurgency have physically controlled, or sought to control, various geographic locales, including Najaf, Karbala, Ramadi, Sadr City, and Falluja. Further, the disparate elements of the insurgency do indeed appear to have adopted a unifying ideology, or at least purpose: they want to create insecurity in the population in order to force the occupation forces out. What the insurgency has failed to present, however, is a unified leadership. While elements of the insurgency appear to have leaders and a hierarchy (Muqtada al-Sadr, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, and Abu Hamza al-Muhajer most notably), the entire insurgency appears to lack a unified leadership and associated hierarchical organization.

So what do we make of all this? Iraq seems to present a hybrid insurgency, one containing elements of traditional insurgency along with the concepts embodied in netwar. Alternatively, one could argue that the situation in Iraq reflects a multitude of independent insurgencies, each developing individually in the classical form. What pattern the insurgency "fits" is a function of the amount of communication and coordination between its disparate elements—a source of perpetual debate. Under either model of insurgency, eliminating one element (senior leaders included) presents the counterinsurgent with yet another micro-insurgency or knowledgeable insurgent. The insurgent has fully dispersed his command, control, and intelligence. The counterinsurgent can never target the insurgency exclusively with tactical force.

## Today's Global Battlefield

Earlier, we asked whom globalization advantaged and how it changed insurgency and counterinsurgency. The answers are now reasonably clear.

***...a globalized insurgency may find its institutional memory committed to the Internet, where it is physically accessible but virtually indestructible.***

Globalization has bestowed advantages on the insurgent. It has dispersed technology from the counterinsurgent nation-state powers so completely that it (technology) is now pervasive and even invasive, to the point where it influences all aspects of all conflicts. Plainly, since the insurgent now enjoys what the counterinsurgent has long had, the balance of benefits weighs heavily in favor of the insurgent. One intuitively recognizes that the new “globalized” insurgent has gained command, control, and intelligence benefits. Less intuitive, however, is globalization’s impact on the insurgency’s organizational structure, but globalization has perhaps most benefited the insurgency in this regard too.

**...the new “globalized” insurgent has gained command, control, and intelligence benefits.**

A globalized insurgency is a diffuse network of fighters and leaders communicating, learning, and executing through many indestructible technological outlets. Viewed in this manner, insurgency presents a substantial problem for the counterinsurgent. However, globalization encompasses the spread and integration of all aspects of the global community, to include ideas, markets, and information. Just as the counterinsurgent cannot prevent the spread of technology, the insurgent cannot prevent the spread of ideas, markets, and information to civilians caught in an insurgency. The counterinsurgent must disrupt and minimize the insurgent’s use of technology while dominating and bolstering the population’s access to ideas, markets, and information.

The mechanism for this is perhaps best illustrated through a passage in the book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, wherein Thomas Friedman quotes Nobel laureate Murray Gell-Mann on the issue of complex systems: “With a complex non-linear system you have to break it up into pieces and then study each aspect, and then study the very strong interaction between them all. Only this way can you describe the whole system.”<sup>41</sup>

In other words, the counterinsurgent must understand the conflict’s components and the

relationship between them. The components are civilians, counterinsurgent forces, insurgent forces, and the world community. The counterinsurgent must resist imposing a meta-structure over the insurgency or attempting to identify a single leader. Identifying a single high-value target to kill, such as Musab al-Zarqawi, sets the counterinsurgent a difficult goal whose accomplishment requires prodigious resources that may produce only modest benefits.

An insurgency is fueled by communication, not only within the insurgency, but perhaps more important, communication from the insurgency to the civilian population. Thus, success for both the insurgent and counterinsurgent rests with the civilian population. As FM 3-07, *Stability Operations and Support Operations*, notes, “Success in counterinsurgency goes to the party that achieves the greater popular support.”<sup>42</sup> Insurgents rely on a supportive (or at least neutral) population to facilitate their movement and operations. The counterinsurgent tries to induce the population to turn against the insurgency and to reject its use of force to dispense justice. Both sides seek to carry their viewpoint through physical acts and by propagating information. Physical acts take the form of combat operations, raids, and IED attacks. Nonlethal physical acts include providing safety, reconstructing infrastructure, establishing a functioning judiciary, and providing medical care.

The counterinsurgent can disrupt the insurgency’s propagation of information by lethally targeting the communicators and technologically disrupting the communication. The insurgent’s message to the civilian population is, perhaps, the most important element of his communications. The counterinsurgent can dilute the insurgent’s message through increased security, successful reconstruction projects, and respectful and controlled operations. He can influence the information the civilian population receives by using news releases, signage demonstrating reconstruction successes, television and radio broadcasts, personal leader engagements, and such controversial actions as giving away satellite dishes, providing free Internet service, overtly and covertly favoring beneficial local news coverage, and blocking detrimental media broadcasts.

Technology has assisted the insurgent by enhancing his ability to disseminate information and to



survive and adapt so that the communication of the message can be continued. Disrupting the insurgent's advantage is a function of understanding the nature and organizational structure of the globalized insurgency, focusing efforts on targeting the civilian population with information, and continuing combat operations against insurgent cells.

Globalization has enabled the distribution of a multitude of ideas and technologies, and in doing so it has, to some extent, empowered the insurgent. Nevertheless, if the counterinsurgent secures and facilitates the marketplace of ideas, insurgent violence and disorder will eventually give way to accord and prosperity. **MR**

## NOTES

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3. Fleet Marine Force (FMF) Reference Publication 12-18, trans. Samuel B. Griffith, *Mao Tse-tung, On Guerrilla Warfare* (reprinted 5 April 1989 [originally published in 1961]).
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10. FMF Reference Publication 12-18.
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12. Mao Tse-tung, "Be Concerned With the Wellbeing of the Masses, Pay Attention to the Methods of Work" (speech made to the Second National Congress of Workers and Peasants, January 1934); Ernesto Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).
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17. "Motorola to Offer Ultra Low-Cost Phones: Sub-\$40 Models Aimed at Emerging Markets," 14 February 2005, MSNBC, <www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6448213/did/6969423>.
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20. MAJ Kevin C. Leahy, "The Impact of Technology on the Command, Control, and Organizational Structure of Insurgent Group" (thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2005).
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25. See <www.pgp.com/company/history.html>.
26. Phil Zimmerman, the creator of Pretty Good Privacy, is developing a programmed codenamed zFone that would allow users to encrypt VOIP conversations. See <www.philzimmermann.com/EN/zfone/index.html>.
27. Terrorist organizations in particular have fully embraced the Internet to propagate their ideas. For a comprehensive discussion of this, see Minji Daniels, "Online Islamic Organizations and Measuring Web Effectiveness" (masters thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2004); LTC Patrick S. Tibbetts, "Terrorist Use of the Internet and Related Information Technologies," unpublished paper, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2001.
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29. Hackers sympathetic to the Zapatista movement in Mexico used a program called FloodNet to disrupt U.S. and Mexican corporate sites; another hacker defaced the websites of Mexico's finance and health ministries; Serb hackers defaced NATO's website; and hackers supporting an autonomous East Timor defaced dozens of Indonesian websites. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Swarming & The Future of Conflict* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2000), 2; The Hacktivist.com, <http://thehacktivist.com/hacktivism.php>.
30. "Son of Zafi Email Worm Attacks Hungarian Prime Minister, Sophos Reports on Virus with a Political Agenda," 28 October 2004, <www.sophos.com>.
31. Brian A. Jackson, et. al., *Aptitude for Destruction: Volume 1: Organizational Learning in Terrorist Groups and Its Implications for Combating Terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2005). This article provides a fascinating, comprehensive analysis of how terrorist organizations learn.
32. <www.globalsecurity.org>.
33. Katie Hafner and Sarah R. Rai, "Google Offers a Bird's-Eye View, and Some Governments Tremble," *New York Times*, 20 December 2005, A1.
34. See <www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1881801012/rightcom/002-9726936-6888044>.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Brian A. Jackson, et al., 10-14.
37. See <www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oif-lessons-learned.htm>. Further, the AWC Strategic Studies Institute, the Air War College, the National War College all provide extensive current analysis conducted by senior leaders and military researchers. The U.S. Agency for International Development provides weekly updates on progress in Iraq. The Department of State periodically provides in-depth information regarding reconstruction progress, including contracts awarded, power generation numbers, oil production numbers, and reconstruction dollars spent.
38. For a dissenting opinion, see Anthony Vinci, "The 'Problems of Mobilization' and the Analysis of Armed Groups," *Parameters* (Spring 2006): 56-58. Vinci argues that an insurgency needs some level of leadership.
39. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 1996), 5.
40. Bruce Hoffman, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2004), 16 (citations omitted).
41. Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), 24.
42. FM 3-07, 3-4.

# TRUTH

## IN DEFENSE OF MILITARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS DOCTRINE

Commander J.D. Scanlon, Canadian Armed Forces

THE SIMULTANEOUS EXPANSION of information operations (IO) and the effects-based approach to operations is challenging traditional notions of military public affairs (PA).<sup>1</sup> Politicians looking for more support in waging an ideological war against extremism, and military commanders seeking more precise effects on the battlefield through the coherent application of all elements of alliance and national power, are blurring the boundaries between IO and PA.<sup>2</sup>

The Pentagon's short-lived Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) is an example of the move toward a more propagandistic information model. According to one news report, the aim of this Orwellian organization was to "influence public opinion abroad," a mandate that some U.S. generals felt would "undermine the Pentagon's credibility and America's attempts to portray herself as the beacon of liberty and democratic values."<sup>3</sup>

Although OSI was dismantled (at least in name), the U.S. military and many other armed forces are continuing to invest in IO capabilities. At the same time, commanders are pressing PA to contribute more tangibly to achieving effects or gaining influence on the battlefield and elsewhere. Public affairs doctrine, however, traditionally seeks to inform audiences, not influence them. NATO policy, for example, specifically states that while PA's "overall aim is ultimately to promote public understanding and support of the Alliance and its activities, information is provided in such a way that media representatives and the citizens of the countries concerned are able to make their own judgment as independently as possible."<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, U.S. doctrine, as cited in a Department of Defense (DOD) directive, states that "propaganda has no place in DOD public affairs programs."<sup>5</sup> Some might suggest that this statement only applies within America's borders, but the same directive says, "Open and independent reporting shall be the principle means of coverage of U.S. military operations."<sup>6</sup>

At a glance, these lofty principles seem to offer politicians and military commanders little hope that PA can bring any tangible capabilities to the battlefield or anywhere else. Where are its measurable effects? In contrast, the effects of enemy propaganda seem evident, from decreasing support for U.S. interventions to increasing numbers of suicide bombers.

It may be true that PA "effects" are not always immediately evident, but this is a consequence of Western political ideology, which calls for transparent government, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and other such principles that militate against shaping public opinion. Therefore, before

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discarding current doctrine because of a desire to see immediate effects, its origins in the democratic tradition should be carefully considered.

Modern democracies find their roots in the 17th-century Age of Reason and the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment. The philosophers of those ages nurtured the radical notion that all men and women are created equal. This belief began to erode the long-accepted view that kings, queens, and other nobles were somehow superior and better suited to rule. Early liberal democracies like France and the United States entrenched these notions in their constitutions.

The American Declaration of Independence, written in 1776, reflects this new political outlook: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”<sup>7</sup>

Central to the new outlook were the notions of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. One of the most influential arguments in favor of such rights can be attributed to the English poet John Milton, whose pamphlet “Areopagitica” assailed the British Government’s licensing of books. Milton wrote: “This I know, that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident; for what magistrate may not be misinformed, and much the sooner, if liberty of printing be reduced into the power of a few?”<sup>8</sup>

The First Amendment of the 1789 U.S. Bill of Rights adopted Milton’s arguments: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right

of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”<sup>9</sup>

Two centuries later, the constitutions of most democratic nations include similar provisions, including freedom of speech and freedom of the press as fundamental human rights. The constitution of one of NATO’s newer member nations, Romania, states: “Freedom of expression of thoughts, opinions, or beliefs, and freedom of any creation, by words, in writing, in pictures, by sounds or other means of communication in public are inviolable.”<sup>10</sup>

Of course, such rights do have limits. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, for one, “guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”<sup>11</sup>

Although limited, these rights extend far beyond national borders. They are found enshrined in international treaties and conventions. Article 55 of the United Nations charter says that the UN shall promote “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”<sup>12</sup> These rights are more broadly delineated in a separate document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the UN adopted in 1948. Article 9 of the Declaration reads, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”<sup>13</sup>

Freedom of speech and the press are not the only democratic rights stipulated in the UN’s Declaration. According to Article 21, “Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives . . . The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”<sup>14</sup>

NATO nations are doubly bound to honor these human rights by virtue of their simultaneous membership in the UN and the Alliance. The NATO treaty proclaims that “the Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments.”<sup>15</sup>

***...before discarding current doctrine because of a desire to see immediate effects, its origins in the democratic tradition should be carefully considered.***



The NATO alliance also adopted the principles of democracy as part of its 1994 Partnership for Peace program, an initiative designed to help former Warsaw Pact countries with post-cold-war transition. The framework document states: “Protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and safeguarding of freedom, justice, and peace through democracy are shared values fundamental to the Partnership. In joining the Partnership, the member States of the North Atlantic Alliance and the other States subscribing to this Document recall that they are committed to the preservation of democratic societies, their freedom from coercion and intimidation, and the maintenance of the principles of international law.”<sup>16</sup>

That a political-military alliance like NATO committed itself so unequivocally to the principles of democracy is significant, for it implies that such principles are not limited to the national borders of the member nations or the boundaries of the Euro-Atlantic region, but extend to the battlefields where Alliance troops are sent. The Geneva Conventions, also ratified by all NATO nations, offer specific protections of human rights on these fields of battle, including the rights of journalists.

Article 4 of the 1949 Geneva Convention *relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* (POWs) states: “Persons who accompany the armed forces without actually being members thereof, such as civilian members of military aircraft crews, *war correspondents*, supply contractors” shall be treated as prisoners of war [italics added].<sup>17</sup> The term “war correspondent” was found somewhat restrictive, however, and additional provisions for journalists were added to the Geneva Conventions in 1977 under Protocol I, *relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts*.<sup>18</sup>

Article 79 of Protocol I specifically addresses “measures or protection for journalists,” stating that

***the principles of democracy...  
are not limited to the national  
borders of the member  
nations..., but extend to the  
battlefields where Alliance  
troops are sent.***

“journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians [and] shall be protected as such . . . provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians.”<sup>19</sup> (Interestingly, embedded journalists could therefore be imprisoned if captured, while journalists not accompanying armed forces should be accorded the same rights as civilians.)

If any conclusions are to be drawn from the above legacy, foremost would be that the international community views the trampling of fundamental human rights, including freedom of the press, as one of the underlying causes and consequences of war. It was by trampling such rights that the Third Reich rose to power and committed the most horrendous atrocities in history. Codifying such rights was one way by which the international community hoped to avoid “the scourge of war” in the future.<sup>20</sup>

At the Tehran conference in 1943, Winston Churchill told Joseph Stalin that “in wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.”<sup>21</sup> The British prime minister was speaking of allied efforts to deceive the Germans in advance of the Normandy invasions. When directed at an enemy, such deceit is justifiable. However, the notion that in wartime the truth should “always” be protected by lies is precisely what the international community was trying to circumvent. Notions like freedom of speech and freedom of the press are the safeguards.

The tension between today’s PA and IO doctrine reflects the historical struggle between truth and deceit. U.S. joint PA doctrine explicitly states in bold letters: “Tell the Truth. PA personnel will only release truthful information. The long-term success of [PA] operations depends on maintaining the integrity and credibility of officially released information.”<sup>22</sup> British joint media operations doctrine also cites the importance of truthfulness: “All communication with the media must be honest, transparent and accurate.”<sup>23</sup>

Romania’s military public affairs policy states: “No information will be classified nor will it be prevented from release in order to protect the military institution against criticism or other unpleasant situations.”<sup>24</sup> According to British policy, “information should be withheld only when disclosure would adversely affect [operational security], force safety or individual privacy.”<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, NATO's IO policy holds that influencing or deceiving one's adversaries is, at times, justifiable: "The primary focus of [information operations] is on adversaries, potential adversaries and other [North Atlantic Council] approved parties."<sup>26</sup> While "approved parties" is a vague term, it is understood not to include the Alliance's own citizenry.

Still, many governments do in fact routinely seek to influence domestic public opinion through such things as recruiting advertising or health promotions. Likewise, government communicators routinely develop "messages" designed for target audiences. Such practices differ from IO, however, because they are normally transparent and follow policy decisions openly taken by elected governments. They are also subject to democratic checks and balances, including the scrutiny of the free press, attacks by elected opponents, and legal challenges. Finally, the news media resist being repeaters of government messaging and strive for balance by questioning government policy and seeking alternative viewpoints.

Notwithstanding the existing doctrinal divisions between PA and IO, many commanders still desire the more tangible effects promised by information, deception, and psychological operations; thus, they lean toward integrating PA into IO. Concern that some of these commanders were blurring the lines between the "inform" doctrine of PA and the "influence" doctrine of IO led the former chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, to issue a letter directing the military's top brass to keep PA distinct from deception and influence functions.<sup>27</sup>

Can PA deliver the effects commanders desire without violating current doctrine and all of its attendant liberal-democratic baggage? Like other military disciplines, PA has to adapt to a changing world with asymmetric threats and a ubiquitous media environment that showers the entire planet with streaming multimedia. In this new information world, terrorists can propagate their information faster than Western militaries can respond.

NATO doctrine calls for the "timely and accurate" release of information. Despite this, the Alliance and its member nations have had difficulty getting inside the enemy's so-called OODA-loop (observe, orient, decide, act).<sup>28</sup> In the OODA-loop theory of decision cycles, time is the critical element, but Western forces tend to be hindered by time-consuming processes or decision-making loops that often require approvals from multiple national capitals across a spectrum of time zones.<sup>29</sup> The challenge, then, is not necessarily a doctrinal one for PA; rather, it is predominantly a process issue that requires political will and trust to be resolved.

In terms of tangible effects from PA, many nations are already taking steps to push the doctrine of "informing" to a new, proactive level. Since the 1990s, Canada has been routinely sending its several combat camera teams off to cover Canadian Forces operations around the globe. The video and stills the teams bring or transmit home is then pushed to national and international media.

In 2004, the U.S. military invested more than \$6 million in the Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS) hub at Atlanta, which collects and distributes raw video to U.S. and international broadcasters on a daily basis. Additionally, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, has made the move from reactive media relations to a robust proactive program by standing up a full-time team of PA specialists who suggest story ideas to the media.

While some nations are moving to invest in more proactive PA capabilities, the current trend is



Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS) website screen capture.

to invest robustly in IO and PSYOP. Once IO and PSYOP are activated on operations, there is also a trend to continue applying them on audiences that are no longer adversarial. The term "IO" is even being used to define communication activities where there is no defined adversary.

Given that the majority of what nations and coalitions are communicating is factual information, these trends are counterintuitive. Meantime, PA offices continue to be understaffed, under-trained, and under-resourced. If more resources were invested in simply informing the media and the public, the results could be impressive. The power of the truth, presented factually, should not be underestimated.

Moreover, if target audiences understood they were not the targets of IO or PSYOP, they might find conveyed information more credible. America's black propaganda program in Iraq, where articles were surreptitiously placed in newspapers by the Lincoln Group (initially contracted through a military PA office), damaged U.S. credibility.<sup>30</sup> It aided and abetted the enemy's portrayal of America as a hypocritical interloper.

In the face of IO, the obvious questions an adversary might pose are: If western nations are

so confident in democracy, why do they resort to propaganda? If they are so confident in the truth as a moral force, why lie?

It might be justifiable to deceive an adversary for the sake of saving lives and winning battles, but in accordance with national and international laws and conventions, it is not acceptable to violate the human rights of those who have done no wrong. Telling the truth is not a simple proposition in today's complex media environment, where information targeted at an adversary in a remote location will inevitably bleed into media and reach friends and allies in every corner of the globe.

As with kinetic weapons, there will be collateral damage in the information war. So long as the military PA arm of government remains true to its doctrine, friendly publics will be told the facts and the free press will be accorded its place. If the West is so confident that this works at home, then this confidence should be projected into the regions where the West sends its fighting troops. In the meantime, those seeking immediate effects must be reminded that it takes time to build democracy, and that although it can be painful at times, the truth will ensure democracy's survival. **MR**

## NOTES

1. "Effects-based approach to operations" is a term NATO uses, but it is synonymous with similar "effects-based" terminology employed by U.S. forces. The glossary on the U.S. Joint Forces Command website offers this definition: "The coherent application of national and alliance elements of power through effects-based processes to accomplish strategic objectives," <www.jfcom.mil/>.

2. The White House's September 2006 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* refers to both "a battle of arms and a battle of ideas," stating, "We will attack terrorism and its ideology" and cites the need to neutralize terrorist propaganda, <www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nsc2006/>.

3. Tom Carver, "Pentagon plans propaganda war," BBC News, 20 February 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1830500.stm>. This is only one example of the many articles and editorials attacking the Office of Strategic Influence.

4. Final Decision on Military Committee (MC) 457, NATO Military Policy on Public Information, 14 June 2001. For more information, see <www.nato.int/ims/docu/nmpi.htm>.

5. U.S. Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 5122.5, "Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASDPCA) and enclosures," 27 September 2000, <www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/html/51225.htm>. The latest version of joint U.S. public affairs doctrine cites the same principles.

6. Ibid.

7. U.S. Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776, <www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.htm>.

8. John Milton, "Areopagitica: A speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing to the Parliament of England," 23 November 1644, <www.econlib.org/library/Essays/milA1.html>.

9. U.S. Bill of Rights, Amendment I, 25 September 1789, ratified 15 December 1791, <www.cs.indiana.edu/statecraft/cons.bill.html>.

10. Constitution of Romania, Article 30, "Freedom of Expression," <www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ro\_indx.html>.

11. Constitution Act, 1982, Article 1, Part 1, "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms," <http://thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001270>.

12. Charter of the United Nations, San Francisco, CA, 26 June 1945, <www.un.org/aboutun/carter/>.

13. UN, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, 10 December 1948, <http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/mmt/udhr/>.

14. Ibid.

15. NATO treaty.

16. NATO Ministerial Communiqué Annex to M-1(94)2: Partnership for Peace: Framework Document, 10 January 1994, <http://hq.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940110b.htm>. This document also commits NATO partners to "reaffirm their commitment to fulfill in good faith the obligations of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights [para. 2]."

17. Ratified by all NATO nations, the Geneva Conventions were adopted on 12 August 1949 by the Diplomatic Conference for the Establishment of International Conventions for the Protection of Victims of War. They entered into force on 21 October 1950.

18. *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1)*, adopted 8 June 1977 by the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law applicable in Armed Conflicts, and entered into force 7 December 1979.

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# DISCOURAGING HEARTS AND MINDS: *Democracies and Insurgencies*

Major Erik Claessen, Belgian Armed Forces

**F**IGHTING AN INSURGENCY is challenging for any type of government, but for democracies the task is particularly difficult. This article looks at the insurgent's opportunities and the counterinsurgent's challenges when the counterinsurgent is a state with a democratically elected government. It will come as a surprise to no one that the main problem for a democratic state involved in a counterinsurgency (COIN) is to maintain resolve. This article holds that to maintain resolve, the counterinsurgent should seek to minimize publicity about the conflict rather than try to drum up public support for it.

I will not focus on insurgent tactics. I assume the insurgent is capable of planning and executing bombings and kidnappings, setting improvised explosive devices, throwing stones at tanks, sending envelopes with white powder to official buildings, and organizing violent demonstrations. Nor will I elaborate on counterinsurgent tactics. Instead, my intent is to show how insurgents link their actions in such a way as to undermine the counterinsurgent's resolve, and to focus on the importance to the counterinsurgent of having a strategy to maintain his people's will.

## The Necessity of Strategy

The ultimate goal in war is "to compel our enemy to do our will."<sup>1</sup> Counterinsurgency provides no exception to this rule. All parties in war try to achieve this goal despite their opponents' countervailing efforts. They focus on attacking their opponents' centers of gravity and protecting their own.<sup>2</sup> Both efforts are equally important. An insurgency's centers of gravity are its leadership and its armed forces. The associated critical vulnerability is the support of the people in which the insurgent is rooted and on which he relies for resolve, recruitment, shelter, supplies, and other necessities. According to David Galula, "The population therefore becomes the objective for the counterinsurgent as it was for his enemy."<sup>3</sup> This insight, now broadly accepted, is the foundation of the COIN strategy of winning the hearts and minds of the population, the insurgent's base of support. Such a strategy will entail a very lengthy effort; in fact, many counterinsurgencies last more than a decade. According to T.X. Hammes, "When getting involved in this type of fight, the United States must plan for a decades-long commitment."<sup>4</sup>

The insurgent faces two challenges. First, he must win the allegiance of the people in which he is rooted. To do so, he enters into direct competition with the counterinsurgent. Second, he must defeat the counterinsurgent's military forces. In an insurgency, especially at the outset, the insurgent's

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military power is almost invariably inferior to that of the counterinsurgent; consequently, it is very difficult if not impossible for the insurgent to destroy the counterinsurgent's forces. However, in the special case of a democratic counterinsurgent, the nature of democracy offers another opportunity to the insurgent. In essence, a democracy's electorate chooses its politicians, the politicians commit the armed forces, and the armed forces conduct the counterinsurgency. Thus, the armed forces need continuous political support to remain committed, and the politicians need continuous electoral support to remain in office. If the insurgent succeeds in coercing the counterinsurgent's government to decide on an exit strategy, the counterinsurgent's military forces simply obey their political masters and quit.

Coercing the counterinsurgent's democratic government to embrace an exit strategy requires the ability to influence the mainstream opinion of the counterinsurgent's electorate. In other words, the insurgent must be able to discourage the democratic constituents' hearts and minds. It is important to emphasize that *from the insurgent's perspective, the political decision to end the commitment of armed forces is equivalent to the destruction of these forces*. This means that the counterinsurgent must have a strategy to win the hearts and minds of the insurgent's population, and he must prevent the insurgent from discouraging his own (the counterinsurgent's) electorate.

Why do democracies get involved in COIN? By definition, democracies provide opportunities to participate in the exercise of power without resorting to violence. Insurgents, however, do not take advantage of these opportunities. They may choose not to participate in the democratic process for ideological reasons, or the democracy's

constitution might outlaw the insurgent's political goal (for example, secession), or the population in which the insurgent is rooted may be excluded from the democratic process. A democracy might also intervene against an insurgency in another country. Regardless of the case, the insurgent's population base is clearly distinct and separate from the counterinsurgent's electorate. As a result, there are two fronts in a counterinsurgency: the insurgent's population base, and the counterinsurgent's electorate. We are concerned here only with the latter.

## Democratic Characteristics Relevant to COIN

According to Galula, "The basic tenet of the exercise of political power [is that] *in any situation, whatever the cause, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause*" (italics mine).<sup>5</sup> It takes considerable political interaction to make the neutral majority choose sides. The majority of the counterinsurgent's electorate is only marginally interested in politics. In a democracy, three types of actors can generate the political interactions necessary to make the neutral majority choose sides on an issue: the government, the opposition, and active minorities. All three must compete to gain media traction because the average constituent either cannot, or will not, handle more than a few political issues, and the media largely decides what those issues are. One of the most important characteristics of a democracy is the fact that the government, the opposition, and active minorities all have access to the electorate via the media. For the most part, the constituent determines his electoral preference based on the few issues that the media presents to him as important, i.e., on the limited number of issues that gain media traction.

## Undermining Democratic Resolve

According to Jon Western, "In nearly every instance when a president has considered using American force in overseas combat missions, intense political debates have ensued . . . and extensive efforts have been designed to mobilize public and political support."<sup>6</sup> A first consequence of this situation is the government's need to justify its involvement in the conflict to the electorate. Ivan

***...the counterinsurgent must have a strategy to win the hearts and minds of the insurgent's population, and he must prevent the insurgent from discouraging his own (the counterinsurgent's) electorate.***

Arreguín-Toft holds that “one can hardly think of an example of a democratic state launching a small war it didn’t claim (and its leaders and citizens did not in some real measure believe) was of vital importance to its survival; albeit via domino logic.”<sup>77</sup> The government’s problem is that it is difficult to explain to the electorate why a small conflict is of vital importance. Western writes, “Because rhetorical campaigns are such an integral part of mobilizing public and political support, there is a tendency to oversell the message. The constant temptation to manipulate and distort information frequently leads the public to develop unrealistic expectations about the nature or likely cost or efficacy of military intervention.”<sup>78</sup>

This initial justification for the involvement in COIN becomes a *de facto* contract between the government and the electorate. The government must abide by this contract or pay a high political penalty. Because the most important terms of this contract are the expected duration, nature, and cost of the counterinsurgency, the insurgent can inflict a political penalty on the government by prolonging the conflict, changing the perception of its nature (e.g., from a “war of liberation” to a “war against imperialist oppression and cruelty”), and/or increasing its cost. None of these require the insurgent to attain military victory.

The second consequence of a government’s decision to undertake COIN is that the political opposition can exploit the conflict for electoral gain. In a democracy, the opposition represents the electorate’s alternative to the government. When both the government and the opposition agree that the country should be involved in a counterinsurgency, it is irrelevant whether part of the electorate is discouraged or not. However, when a significant part of the electorate is discouraged, and the opposition chooses to court them by being less belligerent than the government, the discouraged part of the electorate can tip the balance of power in favor of the opposition.

Political commentator Dick Morris holds that during a war, the government has to give up its political priorities and include the opposition in the government. During World War II, both the American and British Governments included members of the opposition. Indeed, “when Churchill took office, he immediately set about to include

the opposition Labour Party in his government” and “President Roosevelt was similarly committed to bipartisanship as the war approached.”<sup>79</sup> At the same time, “the WPA and other New Deal programs were discontinued, as wartime priorities displaced Roosevelt’s Depression-era services.”<sup>80</sup> Morris argues that President Lyndon Johnson’s refusal to interrupt his Great Society policy and his antipathy towards the opposition were important causes of his inability to maintain public support for the Vietnam War.<sup>81</sup> However, the nature of counterinsurgencies in general—they can go on for more than a decade—makes it almost impossible for the government to give up its political priorities, include the opposition in the government, and abide by the contract. The insurgent can ensure this happens simply by prolonging the conflict.

If the opposition decides to exploit the counterinsurgency for electoral gain, it must present a credible alternative to the electorate. It is not enough to prove that the government has been unsuccessful; the opposition must prove to the electorate that it will do better. The electorate uses some kind of metrics to determine whether the opposition’s alternative is better than the government’s strategy. The pain-to-gain ratio can be such a metric. As we have seen, the government’s justification for involvement in a counterinsurgency generates certain expectations about its cost, its duration, and the value of victory. The opposition’s alternative must change the electorate’s perceptions. If the opposition chooses to continue the counterinsurgency, it will present a strategy to decrease the pain by reducing the risks, troop levels, or military objectives. If the opposition chooses to end the counterinsurgency, it will seek to make an exit strategy politically acceptable by questioning the value of victory or the government’s argument that a favorable outcome of the conflict is of vital importance for the country. Because the opposition’s alternative strategy only serves electoral purposes, it does not necessarily have to make military sense.

A third consequence of a democratic government counterinsurgency is that it provides opportunities for active minorities to push their own agendas or even simply to advocate their own existence. This phenomenon is relatively new, its rapid development due to the revolution in communication technology. Computers and the Internet, cell phones, and fax



machines have enabled small, well-organized groups to gain media traction and set parts of the political agenda. The Zapatista insurgency in Mexico is an example of this. A RAND Corporation publication reported that the Zapatista-related “swarming by a large multitude of militant NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] in response to a distant upheaval—the first major case anywhere—was no anomaly. It drew on two to three decades of relatively unnoticed organizational and technological changes around the world that meant the information revolution was altering the context and conduct of social conflict. Because of this, the NGOs were able to form into highly networked, loosely coordinated, cross-border coalitions to wage an information-age social netwar that would constrain the Mexican government and assist the EZLN’s [Zapatista Army of National Liberation’s] cause.”<sup>12</sup>

The insurgent now has access to the counterinsurgent’s electorate via active minorities, typically well meaning groups, often based in the counterinsurgent’s own country, which have no direct stake in the conflict. Lenin had a term for active intellectuals who adopted a foreign cause to challenge their own

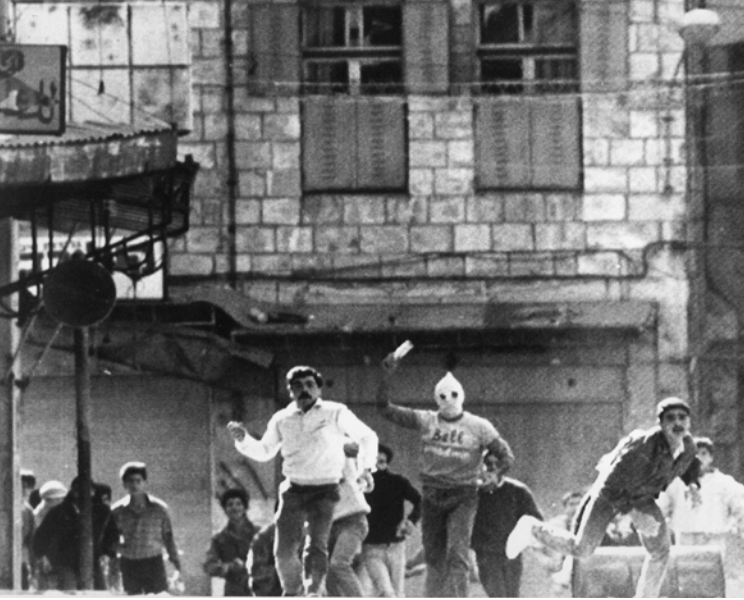
leaders. He called them “useful idiots.” What *is* new is the greatly increased ability of these minorities to reach the counterinsurgent’s electorate and affect the political agenda. Unlike the political opposition, active minorities do not offer an alternative to the government. Usually, they are opposed to the government and/or to the conflict and emphasize the counterinsurgent’s cruelty, imperialistic objectives, collateral damage, and the like, less than the pain-to-gain ratio. Active minorities do not appeal to metrics, but to absolute values like self-determination and human rights. When the insurgent exploits this by providing images and information that fit the active minorities’ agendas, these minorities distribute that information to the electorate.

Only rarely can the minorities unilaterally force the government from power or compel it to withdraw from the conflict. However, highly polarized interactions between the government and the minorities have news value and attract the media. The electorate soon perceives the government’s strategy and the active minorities’ views to be extreme positions at the opposite ends of a spectrum, thus enabling the opposition to present its strategy as a moderate alternative.

Hammes’s study of the First Intifada illustrates the interactions between the government, the opposition, and active minorities. The Palestinians successfully exploited the advantages of modern communication technology and the role of each player in the democratic political game. As a result of a violent uprising in the occupied territories and a moderate political message in the Israeli and international media, “liberal and secular elements of the Israeli society were deeply disturbed. . . . Israel was an oppressor of an occupied area. They began to question the value of the occupation. In the end, the Palestinian message to Israeli voters got through. They believed there could never be peace until the Palestinians had their own country. The problems were in the occupied territories, not in Israel proper. Their long-term resistance caused a rift in the Likud over what tactics to employ against the Palestinians. The result was the election of a Labor government, which then agreed to and conducted the Oslo negotiations.”<sup>13</sup> This example shows how democracies are vulnerable to attacks on their resolve and how insurgents can exploit that vulnerability.



Supporters of the Zapatista movement and members of social organizations take part in a protest against the electoral process 2 July 2006 in Mexico City.



AP, Max Nash

**Palestinian demonstrators hurl rocks and bottles at Israeli troops during the Palestinian uprising in Nablus, Occupied West Bank, on 13 December 1987.**

## The Divisiveness of COIN

The burden is not distributed equally in a nation engaged in counterinsurgency. Most insurgencies are “small wars,” which usually means that only the armed forces and colonizers take part in them. (Colonizers are the members of the counterinsurgent’s electorate who live among the insurgent’s population. They are typically a small minority of the counterinsurgent’s electorate, e.g., Israeli colonists in the occupied territories.)

There are two distinctions between the armed forces and the colonizers on the one hand and the rest of the electorate on the other. First, the soldiers’ and colonizers’ investment is considerably higher than that of the rest of the electorate. Soldiers endure long separation from their families, suffer wounds, lose friends in combat, and see their marriages end in divorce. Having invested so much, they develop a huge stake in the outcome. Colonizers endure all these hardships and more. Because they live in hostile territory, their livelihoods and the survival of their families depend on the outcome of the conflict. Their personal investment in the counterinsurgency can make the idea of defeat unbearable to them.

The second distinction, really a corollary of the first, is that the electorate’s resolve typically decreases over time, while the resolve of the armed forces and the colonizers increases. Frustration is the most likely result of the growing “resolve gap” between the soldiers and colonizers and the electorate. Although soldiers and colonizers get better and better at counterinsurgency, military success

matters less and less. The difference between tactical victory and defeat becomes blurred. Frustration increases because the real fight revolves around what the counterinsurgent’s electorate thinks. The constituent does not compare the insurgent’s tactical performance with that of the counterinsurgent; instead, he compares his expectations with the “realities” presented by the media. For the constituent, tactical successes should push the conflict closer to termination. As a consequence of the human tendency to think in linear terms, the constituent expects that “getting closer to termination” will bring a gradual decrease in violence. If there is little change in the number of violent incidents, whether the military outcome is tactical victory or defeat almost does not matter: the constituent concludes that “realities” do not fit his expectations and becomes frustrated.

Adding to the overall motivational problem is the fact that soldiers and colonizers represent only a small part of the electorate; therefore, politicians typically care less about their opinions than those of the electorate back home, even though soldiers and colonizers contribute much more to the COIN effort. This adds considerably to the latter’s frustration.

Military coups d’etat, political assassinations, and deeply scarred armed forces are but a few dramatic examples of the effects of “resolve gap” frustration on democracies. In 1958, the French electorate’s opposition to the war in Algeria grew to the point that the colonizers and army feared that President Charles de Gaulle would capitulate to the insurgents; in May 1958, they united and attempted to seize power.<sup>14</sup> In 1995, a Jewish extremist who opposed giving up colonies in the occupied territories assassinated the Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin. As part of its legacy, the Vietnam War left the American military largely demoralized.

## Keys to Maintaining Resolve

A discouraged electorate can be devastating for the democratic counterinsurgent, akin to destruction of his armed forces. The counterinsurgent must have a strategy to prevent this from happening. However, the three steps that might preclude such discouragement are impossible to take. The counterinsurgent cannot start a war without justifying it to his electorate; he cannot include the opposition in the government and abandon the government’s

political priorities for the entire duration of the war; and he cannot curtail the activities of the active minorities that oppose the counterinsurgency.

According to Max Boot, it is possible to fight “wars without significant popular support.”<sup>15</sup> Boot argues that “mass mobilization of public opinion is needed for big wars, especially those like Vietnam that call on legions of conscripts. It is much less necessary when a relatively small number of professional soldiers are dispatched to some trouble spot. This has been especially true of marines. Whereas the presence of the army signaled to American and world opinion that a war was in progress, the marines were known as State Department troops and landed with little public fuss.”<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the key to maintaining resolve and preventing the insurgent from discouraging the electorate is to ensure that the conflict loses media traction. In theory, this is possible because the great majority of the electorate cannot or will not handle more than a few political issues at a time. If the media considers other issues more important than the counterinsurgency, then the problem is solved: issues dominate public attention, the counterinsurgency disappears from the political agenda, the electorate slips into indifference, and the government can sustain its resolve indefinitely. Of course, this scenario runs counter to the usual government reaction when popular support for the conflict decreases which is to start a media campaign to promote the counterinsurgency.

To substantiate the thesis of this article—that to maintain resolve, the counterinsurgent should seek to submerge the conflict rather than increase public support for it—it is first necessary to explain why promoting a counterinsurgency is a bad strategy.

A media campaign’s basic weakness is that it reacts to, rather than anticipates, decreased popular support. As aforementioned, governments typically put themselves in the reaction mode by overselling their initial justification for action and hyping the public’s expectations. To renew public support for the counterinsurgency, the government must then find new good reasons to continue the war and a new strategy for victory. The insurgent has to do nothing. The government’s ensuing media campaign will temporarily increase public support, but it will also stimulate a new set of public expectations. The insurgent can react to these new expectations by carefully timing his actions to frustrate them.

A good example of this was the launch of the Tet Offensive by the Vietcong two months after U.S. Army General William Westmoreland declared that “we have reached an important point when the end begins to come into view. I am absolutely certain that the enemy . . . is losing.”<sup>17</sup> President Johnson’s withdrawal from the presidential race after the Tet Offensive demonstrated the political effectiveness of well-timed insurgent actions in response to a media campaign for renewed public support.

Another major problem with such campaigns is that they keep the conflict prominently in the media. By conducting an offensive on media terrain to increase public support, the government exposes its flanks: the first flank to the insurgent, as described above, and the second flank to the opposition and to active minorities who have easy access to the public and can challenge the government’s conduct of the counterinsurgency. Moreover, the bad effects seem to multiply, because if the initial success of such campaigns cannot be sustained, each successive campaign will be less effective than the previous one.

Assuming that it is better to foster indifference about a counterinsurgency than to increase public support for it, the questions then become: Is it feasible to create indifference, and if so, how does one do it? Based on experience, we can conclude that it is feasible to stimulate indifference. Referring to the counterinsurgency in El Salvador, Paul Cale claims that “during the build up in the early 1980s, the fear of ‘another Vietnam’ and American ‘expansionism’ dominated the news. By the end of the 1980s, the crisis in El Salvador was rarely reported on the evening news.”<sup>18</sup>

The second question requires more analysis. The counterinsurgency must disappear from the news headlines, but it is impossible to start a counterinsurgency in a democracy without a political debate that attracts the attention of the media, the opposition, and the active minorities. Whether the issue remains in the media depends on its cost, its duration, and the occurrence of events with high news value, such as spectacular insurgent or counterinsurgent actions, human rights violations, or collateral damage. Again, the counterinsurgency in El Salvador provides valuable insights in the ways to push such a conflict out of the media.

A counterinsurgency’s costs include money and casualties. The best way to keep these costs down



is to reduce the number of deployed troops. Fewer troops cost less to deploy and limit the number of soldiers put in harm's way. In El Salvador, the number of troops committed was extremely low—it was limited by statute to 55.<sup>19</sup> Surprisingly, the people directly involved considered that “the 55-man limit may have been the best thing that happened to the [Salvadoran Armed Forces] during the 1980s.”<sup>20</sup> It forced everyone involved to be very creative. For example, with so few Soldiers, the United States could not attempt to impose stability, the rule of law, or democracy; it had to stimulate progress in these areas by offering financial incentives to local authorities for compliance.

The 55-man limit also meant that many COIN activities, such as the training of thousands of Salvadoran soldiers, had to take place outside of El Salvador, thus putting the activities beyond insurgent reach. Additionally, because the U.S. trainers of those soldiers never deployed to El Salvador, they were never targets—either of the insurgency or of the active minorities in the United States.

Another consequence of the limited number of boots on the ground was that the environment was unsafe for journalists. Given that heroes are in short supply in every profession, it is logical that journalists prefer to report on missing American girls in Aruba rather than on a counterinsurgency in a country where they risk injury or death. Although human rights violations, spectacular action, and collateral damage did occur in El Salvador, it was difficult for those journalists who did report on the war to blame them on American Soldiers, since there were so few American Soldiers in El Salvador.

The El Salvador experience also suggests that it is probably easier to teach respect for human rights and humane conduct to poorly trained soldiers who know the language, culture, and terrain of another country than it is to teach the language, culture, and terrain of another country to humane and competent soldiers. More important, it is not only easier to do this, but more sustainable. The United States helped conduct a successful counterinsurgency in El Salvador for more than a decade. Initial insurgent attempts to undermine American resolve were unsuccessful and subsequently abandoned.<sup>21</sup>

Recent history supports Boot's statement that it is possible to wage wars without significant popular support if you keep the number of soldiers small

and there is “little public fuss.”<sup>22</sup> American troops have remained in the Balkans and in Colombia for many years with few complaints from the American public. This is not a result of active media campaigns to support these operations. On the contrary, it shows that maintaining a low profile is one way to protect national resolve.

## Conclusion

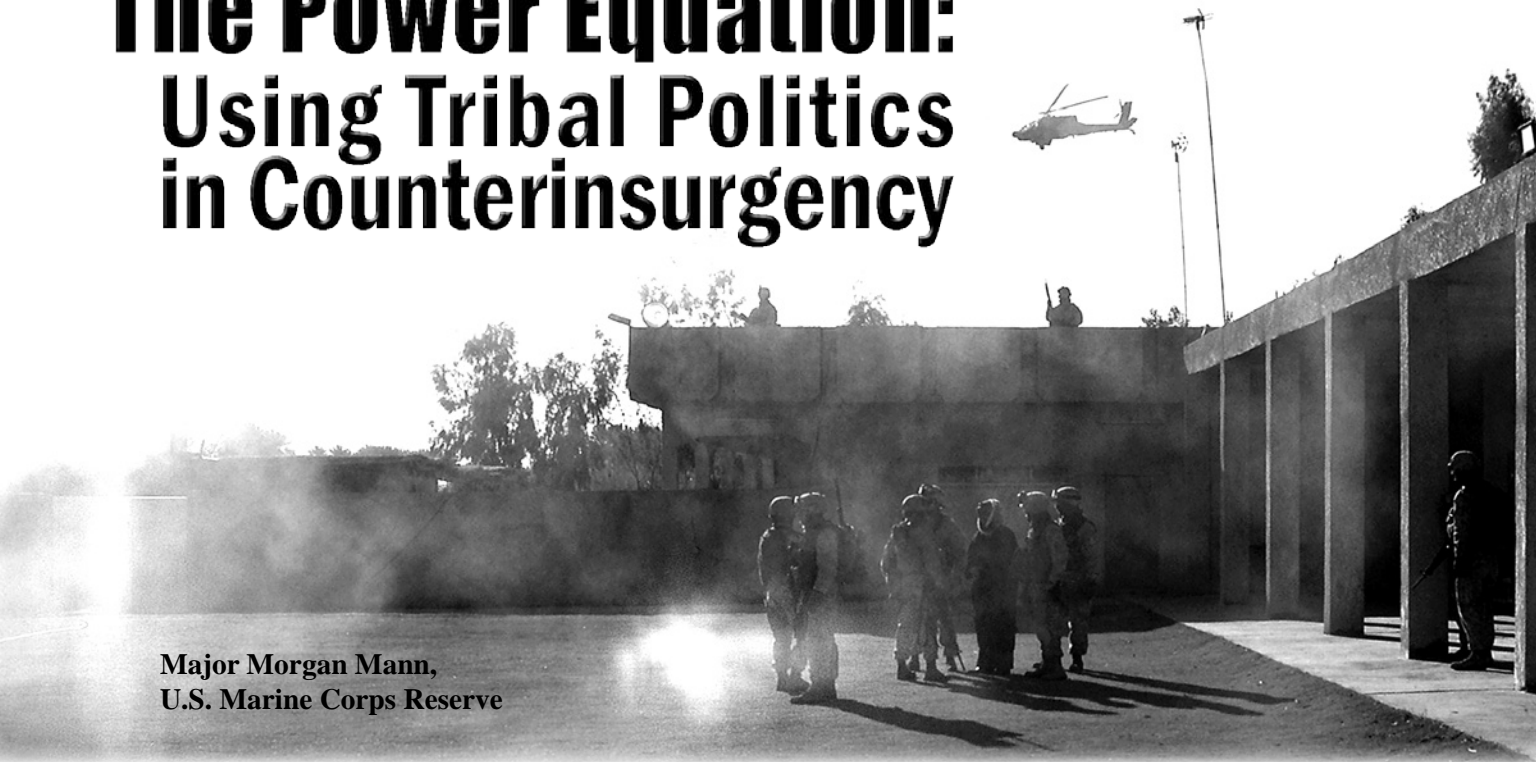
The analysis above shows that when a nation participates in COIN, it is feasible—and necessary—that the nation consider ways to protect its public's resolve from calculated undermining. The U.S. experience in El Salvador shows that one basic rule works best: reduce the military presence on the insurgent's territory to the absolute bare minimum. The best way to win a counterinsurgency is not to put more boots on the ground, but to deploy a politically sustainable number of soldiers there and use them more creatively. In short, when the counterinsurgent is a democracy, a limited military capability that is too small to attract media attention can be more sustainable and, hence, more successful than a large military capability, which can be constantly exploited for political gain. **MR**

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# The Power Equation: Using Tribal Politics in Counterinsurgency



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PHOTO: The author, with an interrogation team, questions the grand sheik of the Caragoul tribe after Marines found anti-coalition propaganda in his house, January 2005, near Yusufiyah.

*(All photos courtesy of the author)*

FOUR SHORT YEARS AGO, the sheik standing beside me clothed in a fine wool *dishdasha* robe had received yearly patronage from Saddam Hussein's political machine, doled money out to his tribe as he saw fit, and, as his father had before him, maintained his family's power in the tribe. Through his contacts and tribal alliances, he ensured that the men of his tribe had jobs or commissions in the army, that their children were accepted into good schools, and that their families got more than their fair share of government subsidies.

In March 2003, with the toppling of Saddam's regime, the sheik's power relationships changed. When the corruption and terror of Saddam's dictatorship ended, so did the informal networks it had used and supported. The sheik could no longer dole out money. His ability to influence, coerce, and condemn declined. With his power nearly gone and an American-led coalition seemingly the reason for his loss, the sheik allowed his tribe to participate in the growing insurgent movement.

The area in which the sheik lived was the most dangerous in our zone. We expected regular mortar, rocket, and IED attacks. Then one day in January 2005, an Apache helicopter hovered over the courtyard of the sheik's home, pointing its 30-millimeter chain gun at him. Marines were searching the sheik's house. His two sons sat blindfolded in the back of a truck, waiting to be sent to a detention facility, while I arrested him for being a financier and coordinator of insurgent activity in my area of operations (AO).

Three weeks later, we released the sheik. He had agreed to stop attacks from inside his tribal boundaries, and in return, I would facilitate several construction contracts and notify him of which men I had targeted for detention. Five weeks after the sheik's initial arrest, attacks from his tribal area ceased. What had once been the most dangerous area in my zone became one of the safest.

## What Changed and Why?

The events above occurred between Fox Company, 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, and the Caragoul tribe in an AO of 150-square-kilometers centered in the town of Yusufiyah, located 15 miles south of Baghdad in North Babil, Iraq. The Caragoul tribal area ran 10+ miles along the western side of the Euphrates River from Sadr al Yusufiyah to the town of Lutafiyah. Lush farmland, a large canal network, and numerous small villages and hamlets blanketed the terrain. The area had also been the site of the headquarters of a Republican Guard division and two large ammunition manufacturing and storage facilities. The Caragoul tribe was Sunni; however, the population in the larger company zone was 60 percent Sunni and 40 percent Shi'a.

Almost all of the operations Fox Company planned and the enemy activity it responded to were occasioned by three of the seven tribes in Fox's AO. The Caragoul, the focus of this story, were the primary coordinators and financiers of insurgent activity. The Janabi tribe were mainly low-level fighters and concentrated close to the company's forward operating base in Yusufiyah. The Janabi were our first target. Upon initiating offensive operations in our area, we detained many of their young adult males. Our aggressive action suppressed much of the Janabi's insurgent activity in our zone. The third "enemy" tribe, the Zobai, were dispersed, with their tribal leadership based outside our zone. They remained regular belligerents throughout our tour.

Our success was a direct result of our ability to exercise power across a continuum, thereby demonstrating that we had ample military and political resources and commitment. For three months we targeted the tribes persistently with cordon-and-searches, vehicle checkpoints, and battalion-size operations. As the number and pace of our operations increased, so did our number of insurgent detainees. The increase led to more accurate and timely intelligence, which in turn enabled the targeting of even more insurgents. Thanks to counter-mortar radar tracking, we quickly answered mortar fire from the tribal zone with our 81-mm mortars and 155-mm howitzers. We also targeted known mortar positions for observed harassment fire. Illumination at random intervals created uncertainty among the insurgents and fear of possible house searches and detentions.

***Our success was a direct result of our ability to exercise power across a continuum, thereby demonstrating that we had ample military and political resources and commitment.***

Taken together, these actions fostered an understanding that the Marines of Fox Company were willing and able to use every instrument at their disposal to kill their enemies and disrupt insurgent activity. Because we demonstrated that we would use targeted violence whenever necessary, tribal attacks on Marines decreased and intelligence about the enemy increased. Soon, we were able to broker truces with the formerly hostile tribes.

Of course, the use of lethal force is not the only means of demonstrating power. There were benefits to cooperating with us or even just remaining neutral. The Caragoul saw these benefits in tribal areas adjacent to their own. We hired local contractors for road repair, sewage clean-up, and reconstruction projects. Utilities operated. Village markets thrived. Schools stayed open. There were fewer insurgent attacks and fewer Marine offensive actions in surrounding communities. Most important, successful elections on 30 January 2005 showed that the government could carry out a political process that the insurgents violently opposed.

In short, we presented the Caragoul tribal leaders with a clear choice: either participate in or at least countenance a legitimate political process, or work outside the process and support the ongoing insurgent attacks on American forces. Based on their experience interacting with U.S. Marines for three months, the Caragoul knew that fighting did not deter their enemy; it just brought more destruction, more deaths or detentions, and further loss of power. In addition, the successful elections voided their argument that there was no Iraqi forum to redress their supposed grievances.

The Caragoul tribal leadership recognized that coalition forces could and would take decisive action along a power continuum ranging from the use of deadly violence to economic and social incentives. Because of our combined use of violence, economic



power, and political force, the sheik and his tribe chose to become a part of the political process instead of fighting against it from the outside. Thus a viable political venue arising in the form of a democratic-like process, in conjunction with the lever of our willingness to conduct ongoing offensive operations, put our enemy on the horns of a dilemma. The sheik's second in command expressed this thought process to me directly. It was at that point that we agreed to assemble all of the Caragoul tribal leadership at the invitation of the brigade combat team commander.

At that meeting we agreed to release the sheik in exchange for the tribe's agreement to no longer support enemy activity. Reconstruction projects were identified and would be committed to based on the tribe's ongoing ability to eliminate attacks from their area. We always maintained the option to resume offensive operations as aggressively as before. Subsequent to the meeting, attacks from the Caragoul area dropped over 50 percent.

## Fighting Smart

Understanding tribal organization and leadership is critical to success in rural Iraq. Unlike major urban areas, rural areas still depend on tribes to facilitate jobs, coordinate services, and generally improve the quality of life. Tribal affiliation transcends religion, and tribal leaders exact more loyalty than Shi'a or Sunni clerics. Some tribes fight the coalition presence, while others are neutral or cooperate with it. We must make every effort to understand an area's tribal alignment and disposition in order to focus the appropriate combat, economic, and political power needed to defeat the tribe or change its position regarding the coalition.

To paraphrase General John Abizaid, "Americans like to fight then talk, while Arabs like to fight and talk." We must recognize that fighting a tribe today does not make the tribe our enemy for life. We must be willing to talk over lunch with tribal leaders whom we know tacitly support enemy activity, then kill or capture any of them who attack us or are complicit in enemy activity. Talking and negotiating are not signs of weakness provided the enemy



Caragoul men being moved to a screening area for possible detention, village of Arab Jassim, North Babil province, February 2005.

knows we will continue to use all the power at our disposal to achieve our aims. However, if tribes predisposed to fight think we use negotiation as a substitute for force, they will continue to fight while taking advantage of negotiation to achieve their aims at our expense.

Just as we develop a combined obstacle overlay when analyzing terrain and enemy mechanized movement, we must develop an overlay to understand tribal influence in the AO. Overlays should display tribe names, boundaries, and dispositions, and indicate which tribes dominate in the AO. Once we understand the tribal relationships in our area, we can leverage our power in the tribal environment. We must collect names, tribal affiliations, photos, and home grid coordinates of all males in the area and meticulously record the information in appropriate computer databases. This will enable future pattern analysis to detect changes in tribal disposition and individual movements within and across the AO. By managing this information at the company level and correlating tribal overlays with enemy activity, commanders can gain a better understanding of the tribal political landscape. They will be able to do more effective, more timely tactical planning that meets broader coalition objectives with less fighting and greater local support.

Companies and battalions should exercise all the elements of power at their disposal, including political, economic, and combat power. Success in

winning trust and cooperation (or defeating a tribe in combat) will not come as a result of division- or corps-level operations. When we exercise deadly force within the Multinational Force-Iraq rules of engagement, we must push decision making down to as low a level as possible. At the same time, we must give the lowest level commander in charge of a village or tribal area the authority to grant civil affairs contracts, distribute cash, and employ civilians. Without the power to dispense economic incentives, units have “sticks” but very few “carrots.” To ensure that tribes understand just how powerful we are, our units must be able to fight aggressively and reward commensurately.

Some might say that determining the appropriate mix of political, economic, and military force is a task for policy makers, the State Department, or provisional reconstruction teams (PRTs), not company commanders. However, our local commanders are similar to big-city aldermen in the United States; that is, they are like junior politicians with the resources and power at their disposal to remove trash, fix roads, approve new zoning, and develop abandoned lots. Like an alderman, the local commander is familiar enough with his area to know what tactics or projects will yield the best results. Company commanders must become owners of the process in their AOs. They must also use the coercive dimension of power, including deadly force and offensive operations, when necessary.

Tribal leaders know full well that centralized decision making reduces the power of the local military commander and the effectiveness of local political and economic programs. We can continue to centralize high-demand, low-density resources such as civil affairs teams, but we must allow for decentralized planning and execution in the use of those resources.

Provisional reconstruction teams appear to be effective in some areas. PRTs do not, however, have the maneuver and firepower needed to coerce insurgents in provinces where violence is still high. We must display the two faces of power. We must be the benevolent provider as well as the steadfast

warrior. Organizations with the resources to exhibit both faces of power will defeat the enemy and maintain tribal loyalty.

## The Power Continuum

Power in Iraq is dispensed from across a continuum of possibilities. At one extreme is the killing of a person or persons to achieve a political or military end, such as eliminating or intimidating an enemy, exacting revenge, or inducing fear in a population. The use of deadly force is an ultimate and irreversible act, one that defines who has more power in a given situation. At the other extreme is an act of great generosity or respect to achieve some political end. Examples are building schools, opening free medical clinics, or treating a sheik's son for a disease. In between these two extremes, there are many options available for achieving desired ends, including cordon-and-search raids, detention and release of individuals, asset seizure, letting of civil affairs contracts, and provision of public services.

Tribal sheiks (and Arab leaders in general) understand the concept of a continuum of power. They are comfortable with “talking and fighting” and “killing and helping.” This does not mean that American fighting forces should throw away the laws of war, the rules of engagement, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and American values and behave



**All the sheiks of the Caragoul tribe, assembled at the author's request, discuss their grand sheik's release in exchange for cooperation with Fox Company, March 2005.**

as though they were members of a tribe. Rather, we must understand how Iraqi tribes think about the use of power and be willing to use whatever power is at our disposal so long as we do not cross the legal and ethical lines we set for ourselves.

The effective use of power requires the willingness to use it. Our actions must be within the Laws of Armed Conflict, yet we must be willing to use deadly force when justified, ensure we use it in a surgical and measured way, and be unapologetic about our use of it. Deadly force is something Arab tribes understand, but something we Americans are uncomfortable with.

We must see power as a continuum. We have to hold tribes accountable for hostile actions that occur within their boundaries. We should not tolerate attacks, and we must speak plainly to tribal leaders regarding the consequences of supporting the enemy and the benefits of cooperating with the coalition. Our willingness to enforce our expectations of hostile tribes through the judicious use of power will determine whether they respect us and obey our wishes or cast aside our demands in the belief that their actions carry no consequences.

## Recommendations

The U.S. military sometimes lives in a black-and-white world of its own making. Its institutions reward obedience over creativity, and risk avoidance over risk taking. We look at the world through a Western cultural lens that does not allow us to see the complexities of tribal hierarchies and loyalties. To improve, we must continue to foster small-unit leader initiative and acknowledge that different situations require the use of different types of force. We must create training that teaches Soldiers how to make decisions in ambiguous environments. Our company commanders must be comfortable working in a world with many shades of grey.

Military institutions have to abandon the belief that “small wars” are the exception and not the rule. Despite Napoleon’s views on the supreme importance of decisive battles and our desire to fight

***...company commanders  
must be well prepared to win  
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unconventional battlefield.***

them, there have been very few such battles in the history of American warfare. Small wars are the norm and have always been so. To achieve victory in counterinsurgency, particularly in tribal societies, we must blend the use of political, economic, and military power as if we were synchronizing combined arms at the tactical level.

Infantry officer courses and intermediate-level professional military education schools must incorporate courses on negotiating skills into their programs of instruction. Because tribal leaders are often expert negotiators, company commanders must be well prepared to win across the meeting table as well as on the unconventional battlefield. Cultural awareness means more than just being sensitive to a community. It is a component of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield and a capability that can help us achieve our objectives.

## Conclusion

Knowing how to operate in an environment of tribal power relationships is critical to successful counterinsurgency operations. To better achieve our tactical and operational goals as a fighting force, our company and battalion commanders must better understand how to interact with the tribes in their AOs. They must also have the skills and resources—the political, economic, and combat power—needed to achieve their objectives. Sheiks and tribes must never doubt that in our pursuit of freedom’s goals, we will avail ourselves of the entire continuum of power. **MR**





# ETHICS AND OPERATIONS: Training the Combatant

Centre des Hautes Etudes Militaires

*The ethical dilemmas of modern war, 3 April 2003, An Najaf, Iraq: Faced by hundreds of menacing Iraqi civilians, LTC Chris Hughes, commander, 2d Battalion, 327th Infantry, tells his Soldiers to smile, take a knee, and point their weapons at the ground. "We'll let them defuse this themselves," he said, and they did.*

THE SOLDIER'S PROFESSION, according to French General Eric de La Maisonnette, "is above all concerned with the situation and has reality only in relation to the moment."<sup>1</sup> In today's environment, however, several new factors are having an impact on the Soldier.

First, ideologies are in decline, but moral expectations are on the increase. International relations are governed by law to a much greater extent than before. The law's increased influence in society has overflowed into the military world. As a result, the use of force is now subject to greater demands for legitimacy and justification.

The nature of conflict has also changed. In today's crises, the Soldier might have no declared adversary, or his enemy on one day might be his friend the next. That enemy might employ horrific asymmetrical tactics such as random bombings, human shields, and child soldiers, to which the Soldier's response might pose moral dilemmas (e.g., warrant-less searches). Clearly, our enemy's amorality must not lead our Soldiers to abandon *their* moral constraints. Our Soldiers are obligated to use force with judgment in order not to descend to the level of the enemy they are fighting. This ethical asymmetry is not new, but the problems it poses are more acute than ever before.

Developments in technology are an additional factor in the Western world, which seems to want to avoid physical contact with suffering. The West's modern weapons permit the use of a dehumanizing technology in which violent strikes are carried out at a distance without their results being seen and without the Soldier having to witness death firsthand.

Warfare's new reality also has affected military command and decision making. Lower-level military leaders in France have traditionally benefited from considerable operational latitude. This autonomy, as much doctrinal as cultural, has proven to be highly appropriate in recent engagements, but it requires perfectly clear orders that subordinates understand completely and that each echelon in the chain of command can adapt appropriately. This is only possible in a spirit of mutual confidence and cohesion underpinned by shared values.

The media, too, have a growing influence on today's Soldier. The media's omnipresence means that the smallest action is liable to be reported. Thus, one Soldier's mistake can rebound on everyone and discredit the operation underway or even the institution itself. Moreover, through the media, the Soldier has access to a point of view sometimes different from his own, and this can lead him to doubt the legitimacy of his actions and his understanding of them. Therefore, every Soldier must understand the mission and its rationale completely, and then act with judgment and discrimination. Finally, the need for a common body of knowledge about how to fight ethically in today's complex environment is reinforced by the growing sociological diversity of our armed forces.

*The Centre des Hautes Etudes Militaires, or Center for Advanced Military Studies, is a premier French military institution. Its students are hand-picked Army colonels destined for France's highest military posts.*

PHOTO: Video grab courtesy of CNN.

## The Law: A Partial Answer

The law is the standard that most naturally comes to mind in discussions about regulating relations between states or between states and individuals. The laws of war (*jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, humanitarian law, etc.) have expanded considerably, resulting in the creation of military legal advisor posts and the International Criminal Court.

The laws meet part of the need for a common body of knowledge very well. They help legitimize military action by laying down its limits. However, such rules and regulations come from experience and are primarily functional. The laws of war have been developed in the course of history in the mutual interest of belligerent states; they seek to limit losses and reduce the cost of conflict. As such, they constitute a kind of “rules of the game” founded on reciprocity to regulate the inevitable friction between states. They are based on international law, which long reflected only the balance of power, but has gradually taken on the function of embodying values. This does not mean, however, that there is a system of values in international law—or that this largely declaratory development without real prescriptive force is easy to apply in the face of the “universal competence” some countries claim. International, national, and local laws are complex and ever changing, and the aid of specialists is often required to interpret them. The Soldier, however, must make decisions quickly and correctly. Law defines the general rules whose application to the complexity of a real situation is sometimes difficult. Just the size and complexity of the legal corpus can inhibit the combatant.

The law does not have all the answers, especially in the current climate of ambiguous situations inherent in peacemaking. To come up with something a Soldier can use, we must consult a reference that is universal, more demanding, and more accessible than the law: collective and individual codes of ethics and practices based on conscience. Although the law provides a framework and reference points, ethics provides sense.

## The Foundations of Ethics

In action, it is relatively easy to choose between good and bad. To choose between a greater and a lesser good is more difficult. For Soldiers, it's even tougher: they frequently have a choice only

between two bad courses of action. The Soldier must be able to rely on soundly based fundamentals to keep from losing his dignity or his reason.

Ethics helps us avoid situations that seek “good” objectives by means that are not good. It enables us to direct action. Military action is an area in which moral intent and action should converge, whatever the hazards of an uncertain environment. Faced with violence, the Soldier can use ethics to control force so as not to exceed the aims sought.

Ethical systems often rest on anthropological hypotheses—philosophical or theological—and are difficult to adopt without analysis. A universal system of ethics Soldiers could use would have to be based on a fundamental principle that is easily accessible and shareable. What is the ultimate value, if not affirmation of our shared humanity and, as its corollary, respect for man's integrity and freedom? Human dignity is the rock to which we must cling in all circumstances. Human dignity is the property of all people, regardless of their physical, intellectual, or moral qualities, social status, or personal merits. With human dignity to sustain him, the Soldier can overcome his adversary, but still respect him and never take advantage of him (for example, when the adversary is wounded or taken prisoner).

## Ethics and Law

These two frames of reference, ethics and the law, coexist, which leads us to question their relationship. Although the law has gradually been inspired by a moral code, it neither replaces nor encompasses the moral code, which is broader and more demanding. The law has the advantage of being recognized by all and of being less easily open to contradictory interpretations. The similarity of the moral and the legal is very pronounced in some countries, especially in France, where ethical obligations have a legal dimension. However, this way of looking at things is not universal: according to Pierre Hassner, in some countries (for instance, the United States) the moral code is identified with liberty, while in other countries, the moral code is founded on religious precepts.

What does one do when the law and ethics prescribe different behavior? The law changes and is open to interpretation; it cannot be perfect; it cannot foresee every situation; it can even have appalling

consequences (for example, the massacres carried out by many totalitarian regimes were legal). On the other hand, always giving primacy to a code of ethics is not acceptable either, because this attitude also can lead to excesses such as implacable holy wars. The tension between law and ethics has always existed, but the risk of conflict between them is less when a code of ethics is founded on respect for human beings or Western systems of law. Thus, one can propose that, as a rule, states should normally observe the rule of law, and individuals can reasonably adhere to ethical principles.

## Ethics and Operations

Ethics and operational effectiveness are often thought to be in conflict. Some believe the adoption of moral behavior can reduce the chances for military success. While ethics can sometimes constrain operations, in the long term and in a collective sense, there is no real contradiction between ethics and operational effectiveness. Thus, whatever the conditions at the time, the use of torture in the Algerian war has had long-term catastrophic consequences. Moral force has always been a major element in gaining ascendancy over an adversary. Resorting to violence less often is more than adequately compensated for by a clearer conscience.

On the other hand, negative examples abound showing that an obsession with efficacy can lead to the worsening of violence instead of its reduction—the exact opposite of the objective sought. This will be the case in any fight against terrorism, wherein a lack of discrimination and control will fuel more terrorism, which feeds on hatred.

Finally, in present-day operations, one's strategy is often aimed at gaining the confidence of the population, and here a moral attitude is useful, even essential. This requirement is all the stronger because forces today must frequently maintain a long-term presence. To head off hostile reaction and to avoid giving ammunition to critics, the force's conduct must be irreproachable. The success of many military operations has largely been the result of the images they created, especially in moral terms. Effectiveness thus calls for the adoption of ethical behavior.

On operations, the Soldier is confronted with tension, possibly significant tension, between moral (and hence ethical) imperatives that are permanent whatever the nature of the conflict, the type

of engagement, the reality of the situation, or the urgency of actions required. To the Soldier, it matters not only that the cause is just, but also that the means employed are just. But because causes and means can both be problematic, there will always be some tension between the two.

The process of political legitimization—*ad bellum*, the end state sought; *in bello*, the conditions of the intervention—is becoming an essential condition for effectiveness. It determines the moral, political, and legal acceptability of military action. The Soldier, like other citizens, has a political view. To prevent him from subordinating his duty to his political preferences, a military action must not be too politically partisan or too influenced by international moral opinion or law, which can be open to misinterpretation and can lead to excesses.

An operation's acceptability also requires effective communication within military formations before and during the deployment period. As the mission progresses and contact with the population blurs his judgment, a Soldier can fail to understand the fundamental reasons for his presence in a theater of war and the operational objectives of the action underway. Communicating the aims of the intervention, the desired end state, the ways and means employed, the mission's constraints and imperatives, and the rules of behavior requires the commander to conduct detailed analysis and disseminate information downward in clear terms understandable by all. The commander's effort to instruct promotes coherence and is the price he pays to maintain the Soldier's confidence in the chain of command and to keep the Soldier from conducting a private war on the ground and in the public and private media. The commander's effort ensures the force is prepared for the demands of its mission.

## Ethics Training

Each Soldier is responsible for his actions, including those he carries out in obedience to orders, and each commander is responsible for his actions, including those given to him by his political masters. Both require the informed habit of obedience. Each commander and Soldier must try to understand the reasoning behind an order so they can better execute it. This requires that the Soldier have genuine confidence in his superiors, but also be able to exercise his own authority as well.



The Soldier's mission is not to add violence to violence, but to avoid escalating violence or to reduce or avoid it by controlling the use of force. To keep force in check, those who can wield it must exercise self-control. The perception that a mission is to some extent inappropriate must not lead to actions that go beyond the stated objective, which should not be open to personal interpretation. The ethic of responsibility takes precedence over the ethic of conviction.

Ethics is therefore an imperative for any Soldier in action. It presupposes the identification of, instruction in, and practice of a sound corpus founded on a genuine education. Ethics must move from the philosophical or moral realm to become part of a state of mind. Ethics is not merely the training system's responsibility, but also the commander's; he must develop a way to teach it.

Although it resides in the deepest roots of our conscience, ethics is not innate. Like physical or technical education or training, it must be inculcated. Given the immense responsibilities the Soldier bears, his ethical instruction must be wide ranging. Ethics is a necessity for a military commander because he structures and motivates the group; it is he who must ensure his Soldiers are prepared not only practically and physically, but also morally. There is no doubt that the process of ethics education, begun in basic training, should be taken forward in the unit.

To produce results, ethical thought and training must not be restricted to simply studying a few examples of behavior; at best, this will only help resolve yesterday's problems. Intellectual training should preferably be accompanied by moral education concentrating on the individual Soldier's conscience to help him use sound judgment, come to a correct decision, and then implement it.

Ethics is not just a module in a course. It is a discipline designed to enrich the conscience rather than the brain. It strengthens the link between the moral justification for an action and its execution. Ethics training should not be confined to a special course, but should be at the heart of all preparation for combat. Such training should be based on the study of texts supplemented by simulated combat situations in exercises and studies of real cases at all levels illustrated by real experiences, whether they ended in success or failure.

Proper ethics training is not a matter of passing knowledge, but of inculcating a state of mind so that the Soldier who is unexpectedly confronted with a difficult situation can find the resources within himself to act appropriately. **MR**

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#### NOTES

1. Committee "A", Centre des Hautes Etudes Militaires, 55th Session, *Le Metier du Soldat* (Paris: Editions Economica, 2002).

## Meat Maker

**Skinless carcasses amid woolen flock; slaughtered  
In the Muslim way; hot copper knife carves a  
Sluggish duck-blind to a stop and  
Then breathless world in  
Stop-frame! Moments  
On mobile-bunkers shook  
In atom-breaking sight and sound;  
Smells and everything rush US when life and  
Loss share places we cry and hurl and blaspheme**

**At the wrong time?**

# MR Classics Revisited



**A Savage War of Peace**, Alistair Horne, reviewed by LTC Robert M. Cassidy, USA

Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (New York Review Books Classics, New York, 2006) was first published in 1977. It has

since been reissued, in paperback, with a preface that updates its relevance to the counterinsurgency in Iraq. *A Savage War* is an exquisite history of the French war in Algeria, and it has earned Horne lasting acclaim. It is also the single most interesting book about countering a nationalist insurgency amidst a Muslim population.

Soldiers and defense experts need to read and study this classic. In doing so, they will find that it offers a suitable sequel to two classics recently revisited in *Military Review*: Jean Larteguy's *The Centurions* (New York: Dutton, 1962) and Bernard Fall's *Street Without Joy* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1994). *The Centurions*, a novel, covered the French experiences in both Indochina and Algeria. *Street Without Joy* and *A Savage War* complement Larteguy's book, as each examines the French wars in Indochina and Algeria separately.

The Algerian war provided one final chance for the French Army to rescue its reputation. Recent defeat in Indochina had spurred nascent French disciples of revolutionary warfare to insist that they would fight the Algerian insurgency under conditions different from Indochina's. This group of perceptive officers argued that success in the Algerian counterinsurgency would require a counter-ideology that was strong enough to animate and unite national energies. A key tenet of their revolutionary warfare theory

was the notion that psychological and political factors must underpin the Army's methods to an equal or greater degree than military factors. Peter Paret's *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria*, compresses the concept of *guerre révolutionnaire* into one succinct formula: partisan warfare, plus psychological warfare, equals revolutionary warfare.

The resulting French innovation of an entirely new corps called the *Sections Administratives Spécialisées* (SAS) was partially successful in winning the support of the Algerian population. The French created some 400 SAS detachments, each under the command of an army officer expert in Arabic and Arab affairs whose training enabled him to handle every possible aspect of civil-military administration and development. The SAS seems to have been a forerunner to the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support program in Vietnam in the 1960s, itself the harbinger of the current Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Between April 1956 and August 1957, the French Army tripled the number of primary schools that it had opened while the number of Muslim functionaries in French service increased from about 6,850 to almost 10,000. Clearly, SAS efforts had some effect in restoring the population's confidence in the French across large swaths of Algeria. Overall, however, there were too few SAS teams to bring about the intended effects throughout the entire country.

*A Savage War* elegantly elucidates another innovative French operation in Algeria, one that employed indigenous forces in irregular roles. Operation Blue Bird was a prototypical special operation that aimed to exploit the ancient enmity between the northern Kabyle tribe

and Algeria's Arabs. The result was "Force K," an anti-FLN (National Liberation Front) guerrilla group of Kabyle separatists that grew to over 1,000 men.\* However, the FLN infiltrated the leadership of Force K and then mauled a French unit in an ambush. Although the French consequently terminated the initiative, out of its ashes emerged a very effective counterinsurgent group known as *Léger's bleus*, named after a Zouave captain who had worked as head of the secret Intelligence and Exploitation Group (GRE)<sup>+</sup> for the noted Colonel Roger Trinquier during the Battle of Algiers. The GRE established a network of Muslim agent informers who, unknown to the FLN, turned coats at French interrogation centers in Algiers.

Recognizing the value of the *bleu* double agents, Captain Léger effectively expanded and exploited his network to fully infiltrate the FLN infrastructure. In January 1958, the *bleus* were able to deceive and capture the equivalent of the FLN general staff in the Algiers operational zone. This feat neutralized the FLN so thoroughly that it was unable to regenerate its infrastructure in Algiers until the closing months of the war.

Horne's narrative is exceedingly relevant to contemporary counterinsurgencies because it examines the employment of civil-military functions and indigenous forces. As Horne reports it, the French effort to integrate security and development through the instrument of the SAS was a good concept, but it fell short by not establishing an adequate number of detachments to cover all of the regions in Algeria. These same challenges remain for the U.S. military and its coalition partners as they establish PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq. Similarities are also evident in the French *bleu* operations to eliminate FLN cadre in Algeria and the

U.S. Phoenix program's Provincial Reconnaissance Unit operations to eliminate Viet Cong infrastructure in Vietnam. Both programs point to the potential utility of using this model on the Pakistani border and in Iraq. Lastly, the French efforts that Horne so artfully portrays in *A Savage War* are also topical today because, in both Afghanistan and Iraq, improving the quantity and capabilities of local forces is essential to securing the population and countering the insurgencies.

Horne's book offers one other, larger, lesson for the current counterinsurgent: if the French had implemented a more effective political program in Algeria, one employing tactics that did not alienate both the Algerian and French publics, they

might have countered the insurgency more successfully.

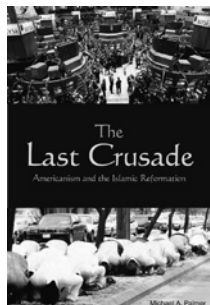
Today, the United States and its partners are also fighting against extremist insurgents animated by an interpretive Islamist ideology. Since American national security strategy describes the conflict as a "long war" of unlimited space and duration, Horne's pellucid descriptions of the topics described above are of immense relevance. *A Savage War of Peace* is a superbly researched, superbly written history of the one 20th-century counterinsurgency that is of most interest to counterinsurgents involved in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will provide those who read it with useful ideas for countering current insurgents in this perennial, ideological kind of war.

\*The FLN, or the *Front de Libération Nationale*, is the Francophone term for the National Liberation Front, the political entity that directed the Algerian insurgents' operations.

\*GRE is *Groupeement de Renseignement et d'Exploitation* in French.

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## MR Book Reviews



**THE LAST CRUSADE: Americanism and the Islamic Reformation**, Michael A. Palmer, Potomac Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2007, 256 pages, \$26.95.

Michael A. Palmer's titular description of the West's role in its ongoing conflict with radical

Islam as a "crusade" is certainly provocative and—to the extent you agree with his conclusions—may be ominously prophetic. Overall, Palmer argues that the conflict is an inherent result of Islam's historic failure to reform and liberalize the tenets of its faith to accommodate the realities of modern life, thus putting it at odds with the developed and developing nations of the world, led by the United States.

In support of this position, Palmer offers a detailed analysis of Islamic history from Mohammed to the present as contrasted with parallel Western history, especially the Protestant Reformation's modernizing role in the West. Students of Middle

Eastern history will probably find these sections more interesting than the average reader, who may feel a bit overwhelmed. However, Palmer makes his point: traditional Islam, with its commitment to jihad and its rejection of secularism and pluralism, is fundamentally opposed to Western traditions and values. Palmer's seeming dismissal of any hope of a progressive Islamic reformation will doubtless come as a shock to liberal Muslim scholars. Likewise, his suggestion that radicals like Osama bin-Laden will probably be the face of any possible Islamic reformation to come will also find detractors. Both of Palmer's opinions go largely unsupported.

Indeed, radical Islamists are actually focused more on "reviving" than "reforming" traditional Islam, religious revivalism being a common response of societies under stress, as the U.S. experiences with revivalism during the late 19th century and, to a lesser extent, the Great Depression, attest. Opportunistic charlatans exploited those revival movements for profit and fame. One might further argue

that Bin-Laden and his ilk follow in a long tradition of messianic leaders who have fanned and exploited religious fervor in pursuit of self-serving political goals. The jury is still out on that.

Palmer is certainly correct, however, in asserting that Bin-Laden and his henchmen "are more than just terrorists" and that the U.S. war with them really "is not a war on terror." We hope he is also right in predicting that the West will prevail, but we shudder at the possible cost of that inevitable victory. Palmer states, "The question centers on how long it will take and how many lives will be spent before the inevitable is realized. . . . How far the West will have to go to win will depend on how quickly and surely the Western powers go about their work. Unfortunately, at present, they are far from united—many refuse to even recognize the war as a war . . . . The real danger is that the longer the conflict lasts, the more likely it becomes that the West, with its unlimited means of destruction, will shed its self-imposed restrictions and adopt an ever-more brutal and unlimited response," harkening back



perhaps to the alleged atrocities committed by medieval Crusaders.

Speculating about a likely Western response to a threatened Islamic nuclear attack, Palmer closes with the chilling warning, "The abyss beckons, and the disunity of the West only deepens the chasm." Palmer's work is a challenging and provocative read. The final chapter alone is worth the cost of the book.

**LTC (Ret) Michael Shaver,  
La Crosse, Wisconsin**

ultimately determine whether the United States is victorious in the War on Terrorism.

Nasr does not consider *The Shia Revival* a historical work; rather, his intent is to create understanding and generate discussion. In the first chapter, however, he provides a detailed historical description of the conditions that finalized the split between the Shia and Sunni. From the very beginning, the Shia were the self-appointed keepers of the undefiled faith, while the secular pursuits of empire building and conquest were left to the Sunnis. As a result, the Sunni majority came to view the Shias as second-class Arabs, mystical in their approach to religion and apathetic toward Arab nationalism in their politics. The Shias, according to the Sunni, could not be trusted because they were philosophically aligned with Iran's Persians and the anti-nationalist Muslims of Southeast Asia.

The Sunni have held the majority of government and military positions in the Muslim world since the Middle Ages. Therefore, it is not surprising that European governments have tended to countenance the political status quo in most Muslim countries, with the result that the Sunnis were able to maintain their political, economic, and social domination of the Shia. Contemporary Shia scholars are quick to point out that by providing legitimacy to "corrupt" institutions, the Europeans unwittingly created the conditions for, and indirectly contributed to, the rise of radical Islam in the last half of the 20th century.

It was not until after the fall of the Shah in the late 1970s and the subsequent rise of Ayatollah Khomeini and a Shia state in Iran that the Shia gained some political clout in the region. While the triumph of Khomeini's theocracy should have been a seminal event in Shia political history, it was not. Sunni leaders universally rejected the Shia Islamic state because it constituted a potential challenge to centuries of Sunni political domination. Nor did the Shia universally accept Khomeini. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (a self-exiled Iranian living in Najaf, Iraq) directly

opposed Khomeini's fire-brand rhetoric, preferring honest debate and peaceful demonstrations as the means to gain political power.

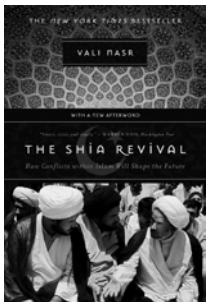
Nasr is careful to point out that the Shia revival is not necessarily pan-Shiism with radical baggage. Nevertheless, an active Shia revival does have significant implications for Iraq and the region. First, cultural and religious ties will continue to strengthen among the Shias across the Middle East. Second, a Shia political consensus will develop based on a need to protect hard-won political gains. Third, the advent of a Shia Iraq will spur Shia communities elsewhere to demand political and religious rights because, once the Shia realize they are no longer the "other Muslims," they will find it difficult to accept a second-class role in Islam.

The bottom line is that the future of the Middle East rests not on any economic or political system, but on reconciliation between the Sunni and the Shia. The United States' legacy in the Middle East may not be the removal of a corrupt regime, the failure to find weapons of mass destruction, or even its ability to jump-start democracy in the region. Its real and lasting legacy may be as the catalyst that helped bridge a 1400-year-old chasm between the two great Islamic communities. In the end, though, regardless of what the United States' best efforts are, the future of the Middle East will be written by Middle Easterners. That future will certainly include the Shia as equal Islamic partners.

**COL Richard A. Everett, USA,  
Retired, Fort Leavenworth,  
Kansas**

**TWICE ARMED: An American Soldier's Battle for Hearts and Minds in Iraq**, R. Alan King, MBI Publishing Company, St. Paul, MN, 2006, \$24.95, 304 pages.

The United States and the Iraqi Government continue to fight an intense and deadly counterinsurgency in Iraq that threatens to boil over into full-scale civil war between Sunnis and Shi'ites. Undoubtedly,



**THE SHIA REVIVAL**, Vali Nasr, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 2006, 287 pages \$25.95.

Vali Nasr's *The Shia Revival* is a must-read for anyone wanting to come to grips with the rampant sectarian violence in the Middle East, specifically in Iraq. At

the heart of the violence is a 1400-year-old schism between the two great branches of Islam: the Sunnis and Shia. The rejection of Ali ibn Abi Talib (the prophet's son-in-law) as Mohammed's immediate successor created the initial rift between the Sunnis and Shiites. Ali's supporters were referred to as *Ali shi'atu* 'Ali, or simply Shia. Ali eventually became caliph in 656, after the death of Uthman (the third successor to Mohammed), but it was not until the martyrdom of Ali's son, Husayn, at Karbala, Iraq, in 680 C.E., that the Shia transformed from an obscure political party into a major Islamic religious force. The events at Karbala provided the Shia with a martyr, a religious holiday (*Ashoura*), and an identity.

Many contemporary Arab scholars point out similarities between the Catholic/Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland and the Sunni/Shia conflict in Iraq. While there are some parallels, the current Catholic/Protestant conflict is regional in nature and confined to the United Kingdom, whereas the Sunni/Shia conflict knows no borders. Rapprochement between the Sunni and the Shia may

U.S. efforts in Iraq have not produced the desired results, and the insurgent, criminal, and terrorist threats to the country are as strong as ever. What caused this failure, and how can the United States turn things around and emerge victorious on this front line in the War on Terror? *Twice Armed*, by R. Alan King, attempts to explain the challenges, errors, and strategy for ultimate success in Iraq based on its author's personal experiences as a civil affairs battalion commander and deputy director of the Office of Provincial Outreach, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).

King devotes the first 11 chapters of *Twice Armed* to describing his personal experiences during the ground war and the initial occupation of Baghdad and in subsequent stability operations. Initially, King commanded the 422d Civil Affairs Battalion (attached to the 3d Infantry Division), and he details his efforts to conduct initial stability operations in Baghdad amidst the power vacuum created by Saddam's fall and the delayed arrival of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. We hear about how he dealt with various Iraqi sheiks to secure the surrender of some of the most wanted former regime officials (including "Baghdad Bob") and his efforts to prevent bank robberies and recover artifacts looted in the initial chaos. King goes on to tell of his experiences in the CPA, where he interacted with over 3,000 sheiks and used his understanding of both the Qur'an and the Bible to calm tensions and gain trust during several tense situations.

While King's personal experiences are certainly entertaining, the final two chapters and postscript comprise the "so what" of the book. They contain King's thoughts about what went wrong for the United States in Iraq and what must be done to win there and against the broader ideology driving Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. King discusses the events that changed Iraqi perceptions of the U.S. presence, several situations the United States should have handled differently, how democracy fits into Iraqi social and cultural

norms, how radicals use religion to incite hate and hide their true political agenda, and the implications of pulling out of Iraq before the job is done. His thoughts are insightful and give *Twice Armed* particular relevance as the United States continues the fight in Iraq.

Special attractions include 16 pages of color photographs of King during meetings with various sheiks and average Iraqis, an appendix that contains a handwritten letter (with translation) from Saddam Hussein to one of his military aides ordering torture for soldiers who desert, and an appendix featuring several psychological operations products disseminated in Iraq that illustrate King's points.

Unlike the authors of many recent books published about the Iraq war, King was there, in uniform; he has sufficient credibility and experience to make his book authoritative. Moreover, he was involved in many critical aspects of the ground war and subsequent stability operations, including the cease-fire talks during the first Fallujah battle and confrontations with Muqtada Al-Sadr's Mahdi Army. King's in-depth understanding of Islam and Christianity lends additional credibility to his arguments.

Regardless of why the United States went to war, the mistakes it made, and the bleak outlook facing Iraq right now, the United States and its allies must ultimately win to ensure freedom and democracy for the Iraqi people and to deny a fertile home ground for Islamic extremists. While *Twice Armed* is somewhat civil-affairs-centric, it offers unique insights into dealing with the Iraqi population that could contribute to an eventual successful effort. It should be a must-read for all field grade officers bound for duty in Iraq.

**MAJ David F. Longbine, USA,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**ROUGHNECK NINE-ONE: The Extraordinary Story of A Special Forces A-Team At War**, Frank Antenori and Hans Halberstadt, St. Martins Press, New York, NY, 2006, 265 pages, \$24.95.

Team Sergeant Frank Antenori's account of Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA, or Special Forces A-team) 391's combat near the village of Debecka, Iraq, during the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom lies at the heart of *Roughneck Nine-One*. According to Antenori's title, the team's story is "extraordinary" and the lessons it learned at Debecka "have been studied carefully" inside the Army's training institutions. However, despite Antenori's apparent desire to glorify ODA-391's experience, the tale he spins suggests that the team's success rested more on luck and good technology than warfighting skill.

Antenori's depiction of the engagement at Debecka is one of an embattled Special Forces A-Team taking on an enemy task force consisting of T-55 tanks accompanied by infantry and supported with heavy artillery. Only later do we learn that the "task force" was really a company team consisting of six T-55 tanks and twelve Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs). Antenori concedes that the Iraqi artillery was ineffective and that the T-55 gunners seemed unable to engage the Americans with anything approaching accurate fire. Furthermore, he admits that the team's failure to occupy available higher ground led to its being surprised by the approaching Iraqis. To round out 391's follies, Antenori describes a friendly-fire bombing incident that he is more than willing to blame on the Navy pilot who delivered the bomb—even though 391 designated the target verbally rather than with a laser designator, and despite the fact that nowhere in Antenori's account does it appear that the team gave the pilot any information to help him differentiate between the tanks they wanted hit and one that had been already been knocked out in the vicinity of some friendly Kurds (whom the bomb hit with devastating effect).

Two key factors served ODA-391 very well. The first was U.S. close air support, which proved to be very effective. The second was the team's Javelin anti-tank missiles. Even here, Antenori's account

elicits some troubling questions. At times, he presents team members as vying for the privilege of knocking out Iraqi armored vehicles, as if combat were a variation of a turkey shoot. The concept of “best gunner uses the weapon to kill the enemy as quickly as possible” seems to have been lost. Additionally, the engagement sequences Antenori describes suggest that little thought went into prioritizing targets: rather than kill tanks first, most of the team’s initial targets were the APCs.

*Roughneck-91* is a lively war story from the good old days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, when the enemy wore uniforms and fought poorly enough to permit easy victories at little cost. Upon closer look, however, most of the lessons presented here have less to do with warfighting competence and bravery and more to do with what not to do. That’s where the book’s value largely rests.

**Joseph R. Fischer, Ph.D.,  
Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE ONE PERCENT DOCTRINE: Deep Inside America’s Pursuit of Its Enemies Since 9/11,** Ron Suskind, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2006, 354 pages, \$27.00.

According to Ron Suskind, Vice President Dick Cheney developed the “One Percent Doctrine” in response to information that Pakistani scientists might be helping Al-Qaeda build or develop a nuclear weapon. Also known as the Cheney Doctrine, the One Percent Doctrine states that the United States “must treat a one percent chance of catastrophe as a certainty.” This low threshold of proof, according to Suskind, has caused a number of problems for the United States in its post-9/11 War on Terrorism. If U.S. doctrine really requires us to act decisively to preempt an event that will occur only 1 time out of 100, we create conditions that virtually assure errors, some of which will be enormously damaging. The main problem with the doctrine is that the leaders of our intelligence system seem to be both political and incompetent, concerned with

telling administration officials what they want to hear while ignoring the analysis of the professional cadre working beneath them.

Suskind, a Pulitzer Prize-winning *Wall Street Journal* author, does not have the typical profile of a Bush administration critic. However, much of this book seems to suggest that nothing President George W. Bush or his team can do will ever quite meet the mark. Suskind accuses Bush of the usual shortcomings—lack of curiosity, concern with style over substance, and impatience with those who will not confirm his view of the world. In the end, the author succeeds only in proving that this war against terrorists will be enormously complex.

Suskind complains about shortcuts the Bush administration has taken, particularly in the area of human rights. He provides several examples of torture, either conducted or condoned by the United States. However, he then describes the *mubtakkar*, a simple-to-produce and easily transportable delivery system for hydrogen cyanide, a gas similar to that used by the Nazis in their gas chambers. He claims that the development of this device is the terrorist “equivalent of splitting the atom.” Suskind states that Al-Qaeda was within 45 days of executing a gas attack on the New York City subway system using several of these devices when Ayman al-Zawahiri inexplicably cancelled the operation, one that would likely have resulted in casualty rates comparable to those suffered on 9/11. In effect, Suskind laments America’s extreme response to the terrorist threat—and then describes a near doomsday terrorist scenario.

To my mind, it’s hard to worry much about water-boarding someone connected to a scheme like the *mubtakkar*. Still, it’s true that if we apply the One Percent Doctrine (presuming the vice president’s statement in a stressful meeting constitutes doctrine) faithfully and often, ready to take off our gloves with alacrity, we could end up torturing innocent people who fit a one-percent profile.

Suskind answers some interesting questions. For example, how did CIA Director George Tenet, who took the blame for almost all that went wrong both before and after 9/11, manage not only to survive but to thrive, eventually standing before Bush to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom? Suskind convincingly describes Tenet’s great skill in working with leaders across the globe, particularly those in countries where personal ties are as important, if not more important, than the formal relationships between nations. Suskind also describes meetings between Tenet and various international players that offer evidence that Tenet could speak to people as few others in the United States could. In the end, Tenet’s extreme loyalty to Bush, exhibited by his willingness to accept blame without complaint, proved almost as valuable as his popularity with world leaders.

One of the more troubling claims in the book is that the United States has made painful compromises in executing the War on Terrorism. One such compromise is the U.S. negotiation with Musa Kousa, the head of Libya’s external security organization and a notorious terrorist implicated in the bombings of the Pan Am flight over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 and a French airliner over Niger in 1989. Kousa is a graduate of Michigan State University, and the small talk between him and an American negotiator about MSU’s NCAA basketball title is surreal, given that they were meeting to discuss reparations to the families of the Lockerbie victims (\$10M per family) and Libya’s abandonment of weapons of mass destruction programs. However, America needed help in defeating future terrorist attacks, and learning more about the enemy required us to forgive these past transgressions. In short, to defeat terrorists we had to befriend terrorists. Suskind describes an extraordinarily complicated world in which we have no option but to compromise what should be our beliefs. He refutes any linkage between the U.S. attack on Iraq and Libya’s friendly overtures



toward Western nations, saying the Libyans had simply tired of isolation and wanted all sanctions to end.

*The One Percent Doctrine* is often interesting, if not always convincing. Suskind cites countless sources throughout the government, but cannot name them for obvious reasons. Because of this, there is no source documentation for a skeptic to check, and one has to take Suskind's word on the content and tone of conversations he describes. Still, he offers several fascinating stories: about a coordination failure between the CIA and FBI that foiled apprehension of the man who went on to plan the London subway bombings; about the role of First Data Corporation and Western Union in tracing terrorist credit card transactions and money transfers; and about A.Q. Khan, the notorious developer of Pakistan's nuclear capability, who shared nuclear technology with countries of concern across the globe. In the end, Suskind has produced a provocative book, one that will have almost as many interpretations as it has readers.

**LTC Jim Varner, USA, Retired,  
Platte City, Missouri**

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**FIGHTING THE WAR ON  
TERROR: A Counterinsurgency  
Strategy**, James S. Corum, Zenith  
Press, St. Paul, MN, 2007, 304 pages,  
\$25.95.

Insurgencies—conflicts in which factions attempt to take over state power by force—have been around almost as long as there have been organized states. In fact, James S. Corum asserts that insurgency is one of the most common types of conflict. Through detailed historical analysis utilizing his extensive background as a historian and military intelligence officer, Corum advances a superbly researched, well-articulated, and convincing argument that there is nothing fundamentally new in counterinsurgency, but that the United States nevertheless remains ill-prepared to execute it. According to Corum, this is so because “war remains a highly human and personal activity, and no amount of social theory or technological development will change that.”

Skillfully drawing on relevant historical events, Corum explains why insurgents cannot be defeated by the rapid, decisive campaigns preferred by a U.S. doctrine that remains rooted in the cold war. He recounts how forces employing a superior long-term strategy often defeat insurgents, citing the United States' experience in the Philippines, France's in Algeria, and the United Kingdom's in Malaya. For counterpoint, he discusses unsuccessful attempts by the United States in Vietnam, Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Corum believes the United States is still fighting like it did during the cold war, with an emphasis on high-tech weapon systems and intelligence-gathering methods rather than on more effective medium to low-tech capabilities, ground forces, and human intelligence. A poor human-intelligence capability, Corum argues, is a prescription for disaster. Until we address these deficiencies, we are doomed to repeat historical mistakes made in combating insurgencies, and enemies will continue to target American weakness (i.e., the lack of forces, organization, doctrine, and strategy to fight insurgencies).

*Fighting the War on Terror* sets forth actions necessary to engage future insurgencies successfully. Corum, like Thomas X. Hammes in *Sling and the Stone* (Zenith Press, Ocala, WI, 2004), would have us rely less on technological solutions. His prescription list is long: employ more Army and Marine Corps ground forces, overhaul the military personnel system, increase cultural and linguistic training, establish rigorous counterinsurgency and interrogator training, enhance military and foreign aid funding, provide security assistance and law enforcement training for host nations, increase use of media modes in strategy/campaign planning, and implement an interagency law similar to the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Corum, however, places even greater emphasis on using the media effectively and training host-nation security forces and police. He argues that insurgents understand the importance of winning the people's

hearts and minds better than Americans do, and cautions against ever again mounting military operations in a country without first devising a coherent plan to influence the civilian population we must deal with. Building effective host-nation security forces and police is another mission that must succeed if we are to defeat insurgents.

What separates Corum's work from Hammes's is the level of detail Corum provides and his explanation of how past counterinsurgency efforts should be shaping our approach toward combating today's insurgents. Although the two authors' recommendations are similar, Corum's are deeper and broader.

This fine book is easy to read, and I enthusiastically recommend it to *Military Review's* readers and to anyone who has read or is considering reading Hammes's *Sling and the Stone*. Because of its outstanding historical perspective, *Fighting the War on Terror* can be read alone, as a complement to Hammes, or as a foundation for secondary readings—it's that good.

**LTC David A. Anderson, USMC,  
Retired, Fort Leavenworth,  
Kansas**

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**WAR BY OTHER MEANS: An  
Insider's Account of the War on  
Terror**, John Yoo, Atlantic Monthly  
Press, New York, 2006, 292 pages,  
\$24.00.

At first glance, John Yoo's *War by Other Means* looks like an extension of the ongoing, seemingly academic debate on the legal application of the term “war” to current operations against Al-Qaeda's global terror network. Yoo's background as a legal counsel for the Department of Justice and his initial focus on the president's legal authority as the commander-in-chief appear to doom his book to an indifferent reception among military professionals. However, once Yoo begins his lengthy analysis of wartime decisions, the military relevance emerges, and *War by Other Means* becomes a book that every leader should read.

Yoo explains, then subsequently explores, the importance of the terminology debate that often seems so academic to those in uniform. The definition of a single three-letter word—war—decides whether we confine intractable enemy combatants until they no longer pose a threat to our freedom or bestow upon them the rights and due process of our justice system. One word stands between wartime detainment and burdening our legal system with thousands of enemy combatants and known terrorists. One simple word.

In *War by Other Means*, Yoo addresses this dilemma from a number of perspectives, ranging from the Geneva Conventions and the Patriot Act to interrogations and military commissions. He discusses the danger of trying terror suspects such as José Padilla and John Walker Lindh in our courts, and the equally dangerous precedent of offering foreign terrorists and enemy combatants open access to our legal system. He explores how the operational environment has changed since 9/11 and proclaims the importance of reexamining a wartime legal structure based on a bipolar world in which only nations fought wars.

Yoo closes his book with an in-depth discussion of military commissions, both their historical precedent and contemporary challenges. To date—nearly six years into this long war—the Department of Defense has yet to try a single terrorist. Yoo describes this as “the Bush administration’s most conspicuous policy failure,” blaming Defense Department lawyers for resisting a process that could have transformed the means used to administer military justice in the post-9/11 world. Instead, Yoo argues, military lawyers issued rules that granted unprecedented rights to the accused, making a mockery of a time-tested and proven judicial process.

*War by Other Means* is not your standard military fare, but it is a worthwhile reference all the same. Yoo is a talented writer whose access to our nation’s policymakers during a critical time in our history makes his book even more interesting.

Military veterans will appreciate the background behind the policies that shaped our wartime efforts, and military readers in general will find his analysis of military affairs from a legal perspective to be refreshing and welcome. *War by Other Means* will be a great addition to any library of contemporary political affairs.

**LTC Steve Leonard, USA,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**STATE OF EMERGENCY:  
The Third World Invasion and  
Conquest of America**, Patrick J. Buchanan, Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 2006, 308 pages, \$24.95.

In *State of Emergency*, Patrick J. Buchanan delivers an apocalyptic analysis of the potential implications of unconstrained Third World migration to the United States. Describing the changes taking place in American society today, Buchanan draws parallels to the fall of the Roman Empire and the transformation of post-World War II Western Europe. Using demographic data and trends, he points to declining birth rates and the aging population of the American majority ethnicity and sees signs that our society is losing its identity. For Buchanan, the result of this trend, in combination with uncontrolled migration, will cause the death of American culture and the emergence of a new melting pot of Third World civilizations.

While Buchanan acknowledges America’s history as the land that welcomes immigrants, he clearly views the current situation as an invasion rather than a migration. The difference between the two, Buchanan argues, is that today’s immigrants do not fully embrace their new nation’s laws, customs, and culture. Rather, they maintain roots in their native countries and use American soil solely as a springboard to economic prosperity.

Immigration promises to be one of the central themes in the 2008 presidential race. Debate on national security issues surrounding Mexican immigration has already occurred on Capitol Hill, without clear resolu-

tion. Buchanan’s ultra-conservative, nationalist argument presents a plan for securing America’s borders and controlling the integration of immigrants into our society. His final chapter proposes a host of actions: an immediate moratorium on immigration, denial of amnesty for illegal immigrants, construction of a 15-foot twin-fence barrier across the Mexican-American border, refusal of medical care to children born to illegal immigrants, elimination of chain migration, the end of dual citizenship, and deportation of any immigrant with a felony record, gang association, or drunken driving arrest.

While Buchanan exhaustively details the negative consequences of immigration on the American population, he omits any discussion of the positive benefits of globalization, the primary benefits of which are national and global economic progress. The migration of a new labor force into the United States and the transference of industrialized processes to low-cost countries enable the global economic pie to grow. While Buchanan supports preserving a nation-state that defines our lives through physical barriers and cultural boundaries, he ignores a common assumption held by most economists: that if America is to survive 21st-century globalization, it must embrace the diversity that comes with joining other nations in free commerce.

Thomas Friedman’s *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, updated 2006) presents the counterargument to Buchanan’s protectionist stance. Friedman questions whether the dissolution of nation-states is indeed perilous. As globalization takes root and national economies continue to extend across the world in search of efficiencies, Buchanan’s “walled American fortress” loses feasibility and credibility.

Whichever side of the immigration debate one sides with, *State of Emergency* offers a powerful perspective on one of America’s greatest challenges. The book pro-

vides ample context for the political positioning we are likely to see from some presidential candidates as 2008 approaches.

**MAJ Kenneth G. Heckel, USA,  
West Point, New York**

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**THE TET OFFENSIVE: A Concise History**, James H. Willbanks, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, \$29.50.

In this short, well-written, and helpful reference, James Willbanks traces the origins, conduct, and aftermath of the Communist Tet Offensive in 1968, during the Vietnam War. He highlights conflicting interpretations of the campaign's success and significance at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. Willbanks includes a brief chronology of major Tet-related events from January 1967 to December 1968; a pithy encyclopedia of Tet-related vocabulary; reproductions of 10 important primary documents; and a reference guide to primary sources, significant secondary works, archival collections, and other resources concerning the Vietnam War in 1968.

Within his narrative, Willbanks ably encapsulates the campaign's most salient features for those unfamiliar with Tet 1968 in particular, and the Vietnam War in general. However, his treatment of the continuing historiographical debate over Tet betrays a vein of institutional bias that runs throughout the work. Given his position as a military historian on the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College faculty, it is not surprising that Willbanks effectively condemns what he deems slanted and overzealous American media coverage for translating a major tactical defeat of Communist forces into ultimate strategic victory for North Vietnam. It must be noted, though, that Willbanks does devote relatively extensive and favorable text to *Washington Post* reporter Peter Braestrup's work.

Elsewhere, Willbanks glosses over the genesis and moment of fundamental reappraisals by Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford and the "Wise Men," President Lyndon Johnson's nine-man panel of retired presidential

advisors. He also affords precious bibliographic text to a chapter by Victor Davis Hanson in an otherwise tight selection of important secondary works. Perhaps the text devoted to the Hanson entry could instead have been used to acknowledge Record Group 472 of the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, as one of the premier archival sources for scholars researching the Vietnam War.

Despite these minor and understandable shortcomings, Willbanks has succeeded admirably in his stated mission "to provide information and resources for further study of the 1968 Tet Offensive." As a primer, his work will launch many undergraduate and graduate students well forward on their paths to scholarly success. *The Tet Offensive* is enjoyable reading and an important new addition to the large body of scholarship concerning the Vietnam War.

**MAJ John M. Hawkins,  
West Point, New York**

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**LIFE AND FATE**, Vasily Grossman, New York Review of Books, NY, 2006, 871 pages, \$22.95.

*Editor's note: Called by many critics "one of the greatest novels of the Soviet era and certainly the best Russian novel on World War II," Life and Fate was recently republished, with fanfare, after a long hiatus from print.*

In her personal and poignant memoir *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Penguin, New York, reissue edition 2002), Catherine Merridale observes that the "social effects of catastrophes like war and genocide are not exclusively subjects for historians." In the exhaustive—and exhausting—novel *Life and Fate*, Vasily Grossman reveals a Russian identity that is so far beyond the reach of fact-finders and trend seekers as to be virtually unknown, except to those brave enough to look past the what, where, and most of the how of Russian history to see the naked Russian soul through the all-too-human lenses of pride, guilt, love, selfish ambition, and the desire to survive.

Western military analysts tend to view the Russian experience in World War II through a God's-eye lens, seeing the June 1941 German invasion, the Russian defeats at Kiev, Smolensk, and Minsk, the encirclement of Leningrad, the defense of Moscow, the bitter street-by-street struggle for Stalingrad, and the great early-1943 Russian counteroffensive as points on a continuum from German hegemony in Europe in 1940 to German defeat in 1945. As such, the battles and campaigns are military means to military ends. Analyzed extrinsically, they are no more or less valuable as subjects of study than the Normandy invasion or the battle of El Alamein. In *Life and Fate*, Grossman, a Russian correspondent whose inspirational musings in the Soviet Army newspapers kept hope (and, sometimes, even humor) alive for countless thousands of Russians in the darkest days of the war, affords us a rare opportunity to think about great historical events in terms of their intrinsic value to the understanding of the human condition—especially the relationship of the individual to the collective.

The novel reveals from multiple points of view that, for Joseph Stalin, World War II both interrupted and enhanced the systematic government-sponsored terrorism of the Russian people—began some 20 years before the German invasion—that made the individual Russian, in Merridale's words, "not only victim but collaborator" in the never-ending assault on human dignity that was the Soviet Union. If, as Benedict Anderson argues, nations are (merely?) imagined communities, then national identity is somehow extrinsically imposed through a complex process of coupling individual identity with group identity that begins at birth and continues until death in a way that diminishes (and can erase) the influence of any inherited predispositions.

Stalin, perhaps even more than Adolf Hitler, Mao Tse-Tung, or any other exemplar of modern inhumanity, understood that the way to forge a national identity that consumed someone was to remove any vestige of the other kinds of community that people consider essential for a meaningful



human life. Stalin made it nearly impossible to value membership in family, church, marriage, friendship, or any other type of personal association, except in relation to one's association with the state. What is remarkable is not that Stalin destroyed so many marriages, villages, societies, political parties, religious groups, friendships, or intellectual forums; the remarkable fact, and perhaps the best testimonial to the notion that human persons are indeed unique entities in the cosmos, fate or no fate, God or no God, is that any community outside the state survived at all. Grossman's characters show how—and at what cost.

Grossman, a Russian Jew, finished the novel in 1960, but it was not published anywhere until 1980 (in France), 14 years after he died. Already renowned for his World War II journalism and such novels as *The People Immortal* (Hutchinson & Co., 1943), and *For a Just Cause* (1952), Grossman hoped—in the relative freedom of the Khrushchev era “thaw”—to publish a definitive Russian epic, of a scale not seen since Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (Modern Library, New York, 2002). Unfortunately, his novel was far too honest. It had the distinction of being the only book formally arrested during the Communist reign. (Grossman himself remained unmolested by the authorities, although the government confiscated the manuscript, the typewriter ribbons, and the carbons in February 1961).

Following a dozen characters essential to the narrative arc of the story and some 25 others central to the main characters' lives, Grossman draws on his own experiences to paint a panoramic portrait of Russia in 1942, from the rampant anti-Semitism that still exists there today, to the randomness of the state-sponsored terror, to the frozen hell of Stalingrad. This *New York Review of Books* edition contains an informative introductory essay and a cast of characters, grouped by physical location (Russians inside a German concentration camp, Russians inside a Russian gulag, Russian soldiers in Stalingrad, German soldiers in Stalingrad, Russian scientists at

a government research center, etc.), which becomes helpful the further one wades into the 871-page text.

That the inhumanity of war gives rise to new heights of human kindness in the unlikeliest of places is a phenomenon many other war novelists have articulated beautifully. Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Vintage, New York, 2005), Norman Mailer's *Naked and the Dead* (Picador, New York, 5th edition, 2000), and Anton Myrer's *Once an Eagle* (Harper Perennial, New York, 2002) are among the articulations best known to American readers.

In a Leningrad tenement, in a concentration camp gas chamber, in German and Soviet interrogation rooms (themselves alike in their reduction—and the motivation for the reduction—of the human to the animal in the interrogator's eyes and heart), in a regimental commander's T-34 tank, and in the last embrace between a German soldier who will soon die and the Russian woman who loves him (on a bed made from a door in the basement of a partially demolished Stalingrad office building), Grossman's characters rekindle hope for humanity. They remind the willing that, in the words of one of Grossman's characters, “if what is human in human beings has not been destroyed even now, then evil will never conquer.” Russian-ness (and German-ness, etc.), then, is (simply?) humanness, Grossman seems to say. This was a message too potent for Khrushchev's thought police, but one that military professionals should not ignore today when ideological fanaticism wraps itself in many different cloaks, marketing itself as truth.

**LTC Jeff Wilson,  
West Point, New York**



**BLOOD AND OIL:  
The Middle East in  
World War I, Document-  
ary Film (DVD),**

written and produced by Marty Callaghan, Inecom, 2006, 112 minutes, \$24.95.

Documentary films can bring a sense of immediacy and emotional

intensity to historical events that is impossible for the traditional print media to convey. Conversely, few films reach the depth of analysis possible in books. This film is an exception to the latter observations. Marty Callaghan's documentary couples the emotional power of film with strong analytical commentary. Callaghan has carefully selected and edited original film footage from the World War I period to create a coherent narrative punctuated by commentary from three early-20th-century Middle Eastern history experts: David Fromkin, Edward J. Erickson, and David R. Woodard. These historians provide an overview of a little-known theater of World War I, shed light on why the Middle East has evolved as it has, and offer explanations for the origins of many of the region's persistent problems.

The extensive combat operations that occurred in the Middle East during World War I deserve to be better known, but the horrors of trench warfare on the Western Front have long overshadowed them. Nonetheless, given the strategic significance of the Ottoman Empire's demise in 1918 and the continuing importance of Middle Eastern oil reserves to the Western and Japanese economies, understanding events in the region is fundamental to understanding our present involvement with and continuing difficulties in this area of the world.

*Blood and Oil* covers a wide range of topics: the rise of Turkish militarists and their surprise attack on the Russian Empire, the British naval defeat in the Dardanelles, the British advance from Suez, the disaster at Gallipoli, the British campaigns in Iraq, the fighting on the Caucasus front, T.E. Lawrence and the Arab insurgency, the Gaza battles and the capture of Jerusalem. Although few of the events are well known today outside a small circle of specialists, all of them had lasting and painful effects. The number of casualties alone should give us pause as we consider the potential cost of future campaigns in the region.

The 1919 Treaty of Versailles redrew the map of the Middle East

according to the interests of the victorious Western powers. New nations such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia were carved out of the corpse of the Ottoman Empire, and most of them were placed under the “protection” of European powers. This was done with no regard for the cultural, historical, religious, and demographic characteristics of each area, thus paving the way for the endemic social and political instability in the region, instability that has periodically ignited wars, revolts, coups, and military occupations and continues to do so today.

Callaghan also explores the immediate aftermath of the war, notably the rise of Turkey as a relatively secular, strong, and stable nation-state. He touches briefly on the vicious fighting between Armenians and Turks and Turks and Greeks in two conflicts that remain unresolved to this day. The rise of Israel and subsequent developments receive brief mention, as a sort of postscript. A sequel by Callaghan to continue the narrative to the present would be most welcome.

*Blood and Oil* could be a valuable tool in classes on Middle Eastern history and for personal professional development. In a little less than two hours, it presents the viewer with a broad historical perspective on events that continue to affect all of us today. It is a great introduction to the subject and should whet the viewer's appetite to delve more deeply into it.

**LTC Prisco R. Hernández,  
Ph.D., USA, Fort Leavenworth,  
Kansas**

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**WAR OF NERVES: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda,** Jonathan B. Tucker, Pantheon Books, New York, 2006, 479 pages, \$30.00.

Jonathan Tucker is a world-renowned arms control expert in the fields of chemical and biological weapons who served as a U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq. His latest book, *War of Nerves*, is a comprehensive history of the most lethal class of chemical weapons:

nerve agents. Military readers and scientists alike will marvel at Tucker's highly detailed account of the various agents' discovery, development, proliferation, and control. He successfully weaves together threads of history, science, and political security issues to produce an unprecedented account of modern history's most widely used Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Examples of compelling discussions include Hitler's rationale for not using nerve agents and the Soviet Union's clandestine development of Novichoks, an entirely new class of nerve agents.

Organized chronologically, Tucker's narrative begins with a description of the surprise release of toxic gases in the trenches of WWI. The focus then shifts to the accidental discovery in the 1930s of the first nerve agent, tabun, by a German chemist working on developing new pesticides for IG Farben, the chemical conglomerate. The Nazi military-industrial complex recognized tabun's utility and tasked IG Farben to develop and mass produce more toxic chemicals. The cold war saw the United States and the Soviet Union pursue a chemical arms race akin to the nuclear arms race. The two countries produced thousands of tons of nerve agents, and with their assistance, many developing states also created programs. This proliferation eventually led to Iraq's mass release of nerve agents during the Iran-Iraq War and Saddam Hussein's subsequent poisoning of Iraq's Kurdish minority. Unfortunately, the end of the cold war has not meant the end of worry. The spread of transnational terrorism has provoked significant concern that chemicals might be released on an unsuspecting public. For Tucker, this era began when the Japanese doomsday cult Aum Shin-rikyo released sarin into the Tokyo subway system in 1995. Tucker ends his book with thought-provoking ideas about current issues, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and international efforts to abolish nerve agents forever.

*War of Nerves* has a few minor shortcomings. Its emphasis on nerve

agents means that other chemical agents are discussed incidentally, merely for historical purposes. This only marginally detracts from the book, however, since nerve agents are the U.S. Defense Department's principal concern. Tucker also pays scant attention to the geopolitics of North Korea's chemical warfare capability and has little to say about the Chemical Weapons Convention. Overall, though, *War of Nerves* is an immensely compelling book. It is important for military readers to appreciate the historical development and current relevance of nerve agents, and Tucker presents that information in an interesting, readable format. In doing so, he makes a valuable contribution to the WMD genre.

**MAJ Peter L. Platteborze, USA,  
Kaneohi, Hawaii**

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**WILLIAM HARDING CARTER AND THE AMERICAN ARMY,** Ronald G. Machoian, Oklahoma University Press, Norman, 2006, 388 pages, \$39.95.

When one thinks of the reformers who influenced the development of the Army in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the names Emory Upton and Elihu Root come to mind. Although Upton and Root certainly contributed to the Army's reform impulse, in *William Harding Carter and the American Army*, Ronald G. Machoian notes that the all-but-forgotten Carter was a key figure behind the efforts to professionalize the officer corps and rationalize the American approach to war. Machoian argues that Carter's efforts to develop a lifelong Army education system and build the Army's general staff structure helped the military transition from an old frontier constabulary army to a “new” army that was better able to address the security needs of an emerging world power.

Machoian emphasizes that Carter's military service coincided with both the massive societal changes that transformed American society in the last decades of the 19th century and with Progressive Era pro-

fessionalization in the civil sector (from roughly 1890 to 1920). Thus, Carter had his feet planted in both the “old” and “new” armies. As a boy, he was a volunteer messenger for the Union Army during the 1864 Battle of Nashville and, after his graduation from West Point in 1873, he served with distinction in campaigns against the Apache and the Sioux. During these formative years Carter also became an ardent supporter of army reform and modernization. Machoian credits Carter with introducing Root to Upton’s ideas and fueling the Secretary of War’s zeal for military reform. Carter and Root’s combined passion, vision, and tireless efforts paved the way for reorganization of the Army’s staff structure, reform of the National Guard, and creation of the Army War College.

Machoian also notes that for all of Carter’s brilliance and drive, the soldier possessed a number of faults and human frailties that sometimes led him to blame his failing on the jealousies and conspiracies of others.

*William Harding Carter and the American Army* is an excellent book for those interested in the roots of the modern American military staff and educational systems and those seeking to understand the complexities of organizational change. The book also illustrates the continuing importance of individuals and personalities in helping or hindering military reform. Ultimately, Carter’s labors to transform the Army remind us of the need to retain intellectual honesty and critical analysis when embarking on change in the military.

**LTC Richard S. Faulkner, USA,  
Retired, Fort Leavenworth,  
Kansas**

**GEORGE WASHINGTON AND  
BENEDICT ARNOLD: A Tale of  
Two Patriots**, Dave R. Palmer, Regnery Publishing, Washington, D.C., 2006, 395 pages, \$29.95.

Retired Lieutenant General Dave Palmer’s *George Washington and Benedict Arnold: A Tale of Two Patriots* provides no more, and no less,

than its title suggests. Palmer presents the tale of two men whose fortunes frequently ran together on parallel tracks, but whose fates diverged sharply. George Washington’s name became synonymous with public virtue; Benedict Arnold’s became a byword for treachery. These radically different legacies, Palmer believes, were the result of differences in their character.

Palmer defines character by its component traits of fortitude, temperance, prudence, and justice; as having “the moral fiber to take the harder right instead of the easier wrong”; and, in Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain’s words, as “a firm and seasoned substance of the soul.” By all of these definitions, Washington excelled; by almost all of these measures, Arnold fell hopelessly short.

Not surprisingly, Palmer is at his best when describing Arnold’s treason at West Point. The author of one of the better histories of the U.S. Military Academy (*The River and the Rock: The History of Fortress West Point, 1775-1783*, Hippocrene Books), Palmer explores in great detail the series of events that became the sole legacy of one of America’s original heroes. Arnold, his young wife Peggy Shippen, the gallant Major John André, and a cast of lesser characters come to life in Palmer’s appealing prose.

Unfortunately, Palmer makes little headway against the nagging question of why Arnold did what he did. After explaining factors that may have influenced Arnold’s decision to betray the cause for which he had given so much—disillusionment with the civilian leadership of the rebellion, disgust with Congress’s repeated failures to reward his contributions to the war, and disappointment with Washington’s public censure of his (Arnold’s) behavior as military governor of Philadelphia—Palmer recasts Arnold’s treason as a failing of character. According to Palmer, Arnold was a “thoroughgoing narcissist, ego-centered in the extreme.” The difference between Arnold the hero and Arnold the traitor was coincidental. “When right for him happened to correspond with what

was right for causes outside of self,” Palmer writes, “he was a hero. When right for him conflicted with other causes, however, his narcissism led him . . . eventually to dishonorable behavior.”

Palmer’s book suffers from the same problem that afflicts all dual biographies: he cannot do full justice to either of his subjects. Recent biographies such as Edward Lengel’s *George Washington: A Military Life* (Random House, 2005) and James Kirby Martin’s *Benedict Arnold: Revolutionary Hero* (New York University Press, 2000) explore the protagonists in greater depth and detail.

An engaging and easy read, *A Tale of Two Patriots* outlines many key events in the lives of these two great men during the American Revolution. Despite his treason, Arnold was a hero—and Palmer reminds us of just how vital Benedict Arnold’s contributions were to the fledgling republic. Arnold’s treachery was only one of the many trials, tribulations, and disappointments Washington overcame during the second longest war in America’s history. Palmer’s dual biography ably clarifies both of these important points.

**MAJ Jason “Dutch” Palmer,  
USA, West Point**

**ARMED FORCES GUIDE TO  
PERSONAL FINANCIAL PLAN-  
NING**—6th Edition, Margaret H. Belknap and F. Michael Marty, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2007, 331 pages, \$22.95.

This new edition of *Armed Forces Guide to Personal Financial Planning* provides a single-source document for service members interested in the wealth of financial information currently available. Assisted by other members of the Social Sciences Department at the United States Military Academy, the authors updated this edition to reflect how technology has changed the way Americans plan, save, spend, and invest their income. In addition, the authors incorporated pertinent information for service members who face deployment to a combat zone.



Whether you are just entering the service or are in the middle of your career, this book has something of value for you. Its straightforward and easy-to-understand writing can help anyone comprehend the full scope of proper financial planning, and it offers practical advice on a range of financial topics, including the basics of credit, taxes, and banking, and decisions regarding housing, automobiles, insurance, and college and medical coverage. Belknap and Marty also cover basic to advanced investment strategies. They conclude with a chapter on transitioning from the military that covers benefits, social security, and veterans affairs.

This guide provides clear explanations and practical advice that help Soldiers make informed decisions about money throughout their careers. I recommend it to all readers.

**LTC Robert Rielly, USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**THE LONG ROAD HOME: A  
Story of War and Family**, Martha  
Raddatz, New York, G.P. Putnam's

Sons, 2007, 307 pages, \$24.95.

"Black Sunday, 1900 hours April 4, 2004, Sadr City, Iraq. Where the light shone that evening, it illuminated only gore and the clenched faces of soldiers unaccustomed to pain."

So begins the tale of 2-7 Cavalry's 24-hour-long first battle during Operation Iraqi Freedom. *The Long Road Home: A Story of War and Family* captures the bravery, courage, carnage, hope, despair, and determination of U.S. Soldiers fighting in Sadr City, Iraq. Martha Raddatz, chief White House correspondent and former senior national security correspondent for ABC News, humanizes those who fought and, just as important, their family members back in Fort Hood, Texas.

Raddatz emphasizes how important the home front is during wartime and points to the contributions made by family readiness groups (FRGs) and the incredible energy they produce. She brings out in painful detail how absolutely important it is for Soldiers and family members to update notification paperwork and contact infor-


mation for use in an emergency.

Raddatz keeps politics out of her book, except where it directly influences events—for example, when the Department of Defense decided to send the 1st Cavalry Division into Iraq without most of its combat vehicles based on the premise (discredited on 4 April) that their mission would be a "stability operation" and not put Soldiers in peril.


While this might not have been 2-7's first time in a combat zone, it was the first time the men in the unit experienced killing—of the enemy and of their own. The feelings they had are well portrayed throughout the book, from the anguish caused by seeing their own killed or wounded to the uncertainty and unease involved in considering how to react to children, women, and old men who had chosen to become combatants.

*The Long Road Home* is rich in detail, easy to read, funny, profane, sad, infuriating, and very human. I highly recommend it for all service members and their spouses.

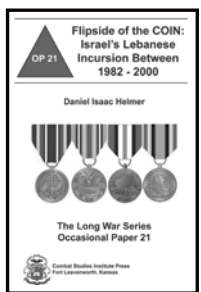
**LTC John E. Taylor, USA,  
Woodbridge, Virginia**



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# Farewell Message

Army Chief of Staff  
General Peter J. Schoomaker

35th Chief of Staff of the Army  
9 April 2007



Tomorrow we will stand on the parade field at Fort Myer and the mantle of Army Chief of Staff will pass to General George W. Casey. It has been a tremendous privilege and honor to serve alongside you, the Soldiers, Civilians, and family members, who make the Army the world's preeminent land force, the ultimate instrument of national resolve.

Upon becoming 35th Army Chief of Staff in August 2003, I issued an "Arrival Message" to the force. In that message I spoke of standing in an Iranian desert in 1980, on a moonlit night, at a place called Desert One, where eight of our comrades lost their lives and others were forever scarred. I spoke of keeping a photo of the carnage that night to remind me of the grief and failure of that mission and the commitment survivors of that operation made to a different future.

Having now been in this Army for almost four decades, and having seen the Army my father served in for 32 years before that, I can tell you in no uncertain terms that today's battle-hardened Army does, in fact, reflect the different "future" we envisioned.

Standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, the men and women of today's Army have remained focused on our non-negotiable responsibility to the Nation. For almost 232 years, the Army has never failed the American people, and it never will. We have been resolute in the pursuit of our four overarching strategies – providing relevant and ready landpower; training and equipping Soldiers to serve as warriors and growing adaptive leaders; sustaining the all-volunteer force composed of highly competent Soldiers who are provided a quality of life commensurate with the level of their service; and providing infrastructure and support to enable the force to fulfill its strategic roles and missions. Furthermore, instead of reigning-in our drive to transform during a time of war, we have leveraged opportunities in this conflict to establish and accelerate the momentum necessary to reshape the entire force into a more capable campaign-quality force with vastly improved joint and expeditionary capabilities.

Specifically, as we serve alongside our joint and allied partners in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, we have improved the Army's ability to operate and dominate in any environment against current, emerging, and unforeseen threats. While working to grow the Regular Army by 30,000 since 2004, we now have authority to permanently increase our endstrength by over 74,000 Soldiers across all components – Active, National Guard, and Army Reserve. We have created far more capable and strategically deployable brigade-sized formations that are designed to receive and integrate new technologies and equipment as soon as they become available. There has been a significant expansion and enhancement of Army Special Operations Forces. We have and are continuing to increase Soldier and unit effectiveness and protection, as evidenced in our reset efforts and modernization plans. We have been developing a forward-looking doctrine which guides how we organize, train, fight, and sustain our forces. Finally, and perhaps most importantly given that Soldiers are our centerpiece, the Army's intellectual and cultural transformation is creating and maintaining a learning and adaptive force that will dramatically improve how we face future challenges. We are growing innovative Soldiers and pentathlete leaders through

training and education built on recent combat experience. Literally, every aspect of today's Army has been touched by change, with the exception of our enduring values.

During my tenure as Army Chief of Staff, I have seen our Soldiers continuously demonstrate why they are our greatest strength. Their adherence to the Warrior Ethos is as inspiring as it is necessary. Their ability to learn and adapt as we fight an ever-changing enemy and transform to meet complex future threats is essential. Their dedication and optimism about our future are contagious.

We must never forget that war is fought in the human dimension. Therefore, technology will always play an important but distinctly secondary role, because even our most sophisticated satellites and computers cannot get into the mind of the enemy, interact with local leaders, understand other societies and cultures, or make the instantaneous life or death decisions required to meet our 21st century challenges. Men and women with their "boots on the ground" are necessary to do all this.

Let there be no mistake, fighting and adapting today, while transforming for an uncertain and complex future against traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive threats is vital to America's security. Although those in uniform have borne a disproportionate burden during the opening engagements of this Long War, we are not fighting and cannot win this war alone. Defeating our enemies requires a shared understanding of the threat and a strategic consensus. It requires a concerted effort, utilizing all elements of power – diplomatic, informational, military, and economic. Finally, it requires a national commitment to recruit, train, equip, and support those in uniform and their families, something that is a matter of priorities, not affordability.

While prudence cautions against ignoring the effect of war weariness and our tendency toward cyclic national defense flat-footedness, let me assure you that from my vantage point, our men and women in uniform continue to enjoy the admiration and appreciation of every American. This is reflected both in public opinion and the Congress. This support has been and will be critical as we continue to fight this Long War.

The road ahead will not be easy and the stakes could not be higher. While there is much we don't know, I can say with certitude that sustained engagement of our Army will remain the norm, not the exception. Therefore, the Army must continue to demonstrate initiative, resilience, and innovation at all levels. The Army must continue to adhere to its non-negotiable Values and the Warrior Ethos. The Army must continue to learn and adapt. Yet despite challenges, everything I have seen as Army Chief of Staff encourages me.

When recalled from retired rolls nearly four years ago, I stated that "as an American Soldier, I had never left your ranks." It has been a great privilege to wear the uniform once again. I remain forever humbled by the courage, dedication, and selfless service of those who preceded us and those who remain in service to our Country. I am proud of you. You are indeed Army Strong!

God bless you – the United States Army.